AFRICA RECOVERY

Vol. 6 No. 3 November 1992

UN confronts tough new African challenges

By Salim Lone

The array of crises intensifying at great pace in Africa is posing a severe challenge to the international community, in particular the UN, where it is being widely accepted that far-reaching changes in institutional structures are essential for effective action to support Africa.

Inevitably, it is the spread of large-scale political violence in a growing number of countries -- among them Somalia, Liberia, Angola, Mozambique and Sudan — that is in the forefront of international concerns. But the continent's severe economic crisis and the inability of many governments to provide basic social services for their people — set within the context of a shrinking pool of development finance and Africa's receding priority on the international agenda — are seen by many at the UN to need urgent international attention as well.

For UN humanitarian chief Jan Eliasson, a substantial strengthening of the UN mandate and role is essential if the world wishes to help populations trapped by famine and violence. On the economic front, the Organization of African Unity and UNICEF are arguing for a major restructuring of foreign aid in favour of "human development" priorities.

It was the humanitarian crisis in Somalia — to which Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali forcefully drew attention in July — which prompted a painful reassessment of existing UN relief mechanisms. The United Nations has been accused of reacting slowly and inadequately in the face of enormous human suffering.

WFP/Paul Mitchell

Feeding children in Somalia. The growing number of African crises is demanding stronger responses from the UN, Africa and donors.

"The world totally underestimated the forces that were unleashed at the end of the Cold War," says Mr. Eliasson. "The UN has never conducted relief operations in environments so hostile, where even relief workers are targeted and murdered by factions, as has happened in Somalia, southern Sudan and Liberia. We clearly have not developed all the tools and principles for providing emergency assistance in such situations." Because moving in this direction would mean a fundamental reorientation of historic UN priorities, Mr. Eliasson contends that member states must take the lead on this issue. Where, for example, does one draw the line "between the humanitarian solidarity the world now demands for populations caught in bloody conflicts, and the compelling arguments of national sovereignty"?

Interview with UN humanitarian chief Jan Eliasson: Page 4

Mr. Eliasson is convinced that the UN's relevance in the emerging international order will be determined in great part by how effectively it responds to the growing number of humanitarian crises. But UN officials are also concerned about the broader development crisis in Africa, which is what often catapults drought and deprivation into famine and violence. Contrary to the international image of Africa as a continent of unrelenting disaster, most African nations have made tremendous strides in meeting their economic challenges, through sacrifices and tough reforms. Despite these efforts, the economic and social crisis continues unabated.

"Africa's efforts cry out for increased external assistance, for action on debt," says Mr. Richard Jolly, UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director. "But even before that, donors could make a dramatic contribution to Africa's children and development generally if they would restructure their existing aid budgets in favour of human development priorities." ■

Africa, donors meet on children

Arguing that more can be done for children even amidst the economic crisis, the OAU and UNICEF will propose at a major international conference in Dakar late November that African budgets and foreign aid be restructured to provide 7 per cent and 20 per cent respectively for "human development" priorities. The restructuring of aid alone would generate an additional $2.3 bn a year for urgent children's needs in nutrition, health and education. Details, pp.16-19.

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Africa faces aid cuts

Recession preoccupies major Western donors

By Roy Laishley in Washington

Africa's financial lifeline — development aid — is under severe threat. Against generally accepted estimates that aid must grow by 4-6 per cent a year in real terms if per capita incomes are to rise, African countries are instead facing the prospect of sharp cutbacks.

Industrial countries' preoccupation with their own mounting economic problems are diverting both attention and funds from the Third World. Development issues — and even Russia — were absent from much of the key discussions at the end-September annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Washington, where the currency turmoil in Europe commanded the near total attention of major donor countries. Calling for urgent action to boost, not cut aid flows, World Bank President Lewis Preston warned that pressures on donor budgets, "exacerbated" by currency instability, "will result in aid cuts which will hit the poor countries hardest."

Faced by stubborn recession, the IMF has again lowered its estimate of industrial country growth this year and next — to 1.7 and 2.9 per cent, from 1.8 and 3.3 per cent in May. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has similarly revised its forecast for its members for 1993 downwards to 2.1 per cent from 3 per cent forecast in June. Growth in Africa this year is now projected at 1.9 per cent, the IMF says, down from 2.7 per cent estimated in May, with 3 per cent instead of 3.3 per cent estimated for 1993.

The pressure on Western aid budgets has been symbolized by Sweden, traditionally one of the most generous, which announced a 10 per cent cut in September, and by Norway, another traditionally generous donor, which is also proposing to lower aid levels. The UK's aid budget is threatened by a 15 per cent cut in new austerity measures. US President George Bush has proposed radical changes in US aid.

In this climate the OECD's recent conclusion that "it is difficult to envisage a significant expansion in development assistance," during the 1990s, appears almost optimistic. A similar view is expressed by the Bank and Fund in a paper specially prepared for their Joint Development Committee; prospects for sustaining recent increases "are poor," it says. Both reports show a worrying fall-off in net official flows to Africa in 1991.

UN/Betty Press

Tanzania Finance Minister Kighoma Malima fears there is little chance of a large boost for IDA.

Resource flows to developing countries were at the centre of ministerial discussions at the 21 September Joint Development Committee in Washington. In his report to the Committee, Mr. Preston pointedly remarked that after 25 years, only five OECD countries had managed to attain the generally accepted target for aid of equalling 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP).

For most African countries, immediate concern focuses on the tenth replenishment of the Bank's soft-loan affiliate, the International Development Association (IDA), a major source of concessional funding. IDA-9 was fixed at $15.5 bn (officially, Special Drawing Rights 11.68 bn). To compensate for inflation, new members and new concerns over the environment, the Bank has been pushing for a replenishment of at least $23 bn, $5 bn of it as an "earth increment" for environmental issues.

This level of funding now looks impossible, officials and African ministers concede, with wider implications for related aid flows to the region. The chances of a significant replenishment to IDA look "difficult," Tanzania's Finance Minister Kighoma Malima told *Africa Recovery* at the end of the meeting. "It is going to be very tough" to get even the minimum of SDR13 bn that would keep IDA abreast of inflation, one Bank official says. This is normally translated as the equivalent of $18 bn, but in recent currency movements has moved closer to $19 bn.

A September meeting of IDA donors made little progress in the wake of the currency turmoil affecting major European donors, World Bank officials said. Further meetings have been called for 12-13 November in Paris, but coming just a week after US Presidential elections, another round of meetings is being scheduled for December. Bank and donor officials are still striving for a deal by the end of the year in order to ensure IDA-10 will be fully operational for its 1 July start-up next year. But Mr. Preston said that "we are still far from agreement."

Mr. Preston told the Development Committee that "several major donors remain uncommitted," with support for an earth increment "limited to a few donors." Speaking after the meeting Bank Managing Director Ernest Stern said that even the minimum target was at "serious risk" and gloomily added that, "it was as if Rio never happened," referring to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Only the Nordics and the Netherlands have so far shown strong support, and then dependent on other contributions. A supplement of $1-2 bn

Source: World Bank, IMF

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READEX FICHE

Enlarging the UN's humanitarian mandate

An interview with Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson

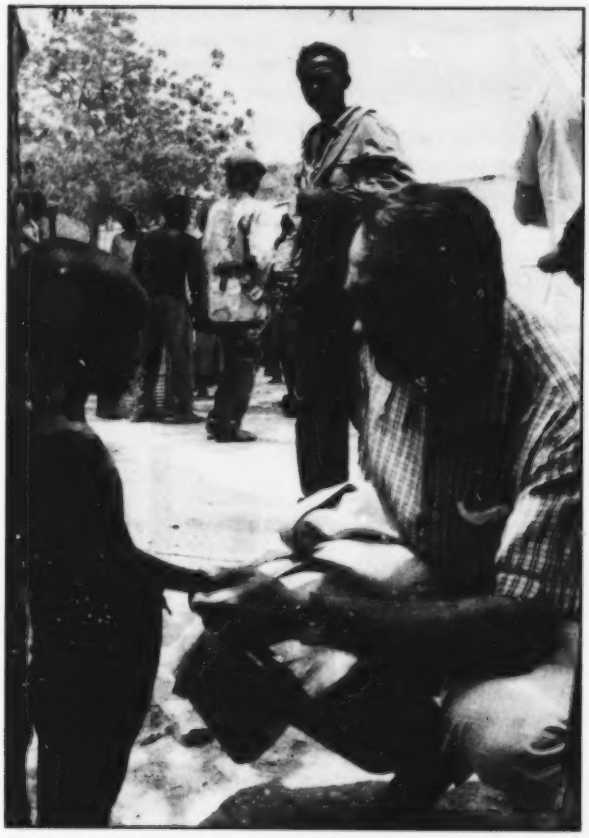
By Salim Lone

Somalia's famine tragedy, possibly the most devastating for any nation in the last half-century, raged out of control for so long partly because effective international mechanisms do not exist to respond to the kind of complex humanitarian crises that are erupting globally. This is the view of Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs who coordinates the UN system's emergency relief operations.

"The world totally underestimated the forces that would be unleashed at the end of the Cold War," he told *Africa Recovery* in an October interview focusing on the UN's response to Africa's proliferating famine emergencies. "The Cold War had an artificial stability built into its respective camps, and the extreme turmoil we see now in places such as Somalia is a historic expression of forces repressed for a long time."

The Under-Secretary-General (USG) — whose office was created earlier this year by the General Assembly in response to widespread calls for a more effective UN response to humanitarian crises — felt that meeting this challenge would require far-reaching changes internationally and within the United Nations. These changes will affect fundamental priorities of the UN and have significant implications for the recruitment and training of staff. This will require very serious discussions, he said, among member states, as well as within the UN.

"At the moment, we are thrusting staff members trained in relief and development work into the midst of conflicts in which they themselves become targets of the combatants." Pointing to the recent killing of three relief workers and a foreign journalist in southern Sudan, Mr. Eliasson argued that the international community cannot allow such things to continue to happen. UN and other workers have also been killed in Somalia.



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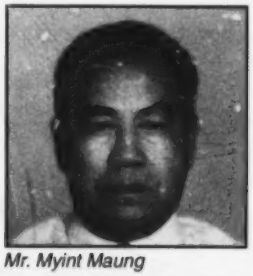

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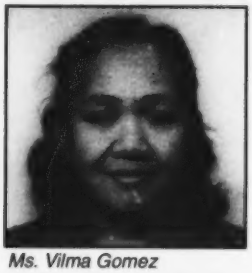

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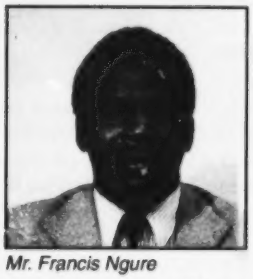


Mr. Francis Ngure

The recent killing of these three relief workers (above right) in southern Sudan illustrates some of the new dangers and challenges that face the United Nations. Above left, UN humanitarian chief Jan Eliasson with child and armed guards in Somalia in September.

International priorities

In a wide-ranging interview, Mr. Eliasson focused in particular on three issues that he believes need much greater international attention:

- The need to balance accepted principles of national sovereignty with the demands of solidarity with those in severe distress;
- The urgent necessity to create more effective preventive, early-warning and quick-response systems to head-off disasters;
- The need to build-in the development dimension at a very early stage of relief planning and operations.

But these pressing issues notwithstanding, Mr. Eliasson said his greatest immediate concern remained the need to find quick measures to alleviate the massive human suffering that has escalated in Africa in particular, as more and more drought-stricken nations find themselves torn by civil wars. His office has also had to respond to numerous other disasters, such as the Cairo earthquake.

In addition to Somalia, the USG pointed to Mozambique, Liberia and southern Sudan as being in need of substantial assistance. In Mozambique, there are fears that even if the peace accord holds and the rains come soon, there still will be thousands dying of starvation because of the ravages of civil war (see page 11).

In Southern Africa as a whole, however, Mr. Eliasson said good national planning and action, and a quick and well-coordinated international response, had averted what could easily have been a disaster after the severest drought to hit the region in 100 years. In Sudan as well, there had been important progress made during his recent visit, where he negotiated rights to 21 new flight destina-

Balancing sovereignty with solidarity

While Mr. Jan Eliasson speaks passionately about the need for the United Nations to be able to do much more in the humanitarian crises resulting from civil wars around the world, he is acutely aware that there is still wide agreement on one of the cardinal principles of international diplomacy: to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of states.

"Given the enormous suffering we are witnessing around the world from such wars now," he asserted in his interview with *Africa Recovery*, "there needs to be serious discussion among member states, as well as in the UN Secretariat and the agencies, about the precise international role in providing humanitarian relief. And whatever enlarged UN role is finally agreed upon, we will need to carefully define the line between the humanitarian solidarity the world now demands for innocent populations caught in bloody conflicts and the compelling arguments of national sovereignty. Indeed, in Somalia and elsewhere, I am daily trying to strike a balance between the two."

Mr. Eliasson said that it was vital to guard against any diminution of the impartial and neutral character of the UN as an intergovernmental body, to respect the principles of international law and to respect also "the sensitivities of many countries, particularly the younger countries, who don't want to see the sovereignty of their young nations diminished in whatever new mechanisms we create." On the other hand, he continued, "if at this stage of history, with the ending of the Cold War and the beginning of a new era, we cannot put the welfare of human beings at the centre of all our concerns and operations, and really prove that the whole idea of organizing ourselves in societies and international organizations is to improve the conditions in which we all live, then we are failing humanity. So how we here strike this balance is going to be crucial for the relevance of the United Nations in this new international environment."

In addition to the legitimate sensitivity about sovereignty is the issue of "militarization" of humanitarian operations which a number of groups are concerned about. For the first time in history, the Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions establishing armed escorts for relief operations, thereby integrating the humanitarian and the peace-keeping functions. "This is now a fact of life," says Mr. Eliasson, "and a sad one. But such escorts are clearly needed, as is demonstrated by the outrages being committed against civilians in so many conflicts right now."

tions in areas controlled by the government as well as its opponents. And Mr. Eliasson spoke also of the progress made in Somalia through the "energetic efforts" of Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun (see page 6).

The Under-Secretary-General said that in Southern Africa in particular, donor response had been generous, in spite of fears over 'donor fatigue.' However, the donor practice of earmarking funds to particular countries had made the UN's relief task harder. Donor generosity, also, had not extended to urgent non-food areas such as medicines, clothes, blankets and water. Even in Southern Africa, only a fifth of such needs had been met, he said.

Horn of Africa
(Food aid needs through 1992)

	Population affected[1] (mn)	Total food needed ('000 tonnes)	Food shortfall[2] Oct.-Dec. ('000 tonnes)
Somalia	2.4	173	(25)[3]
Sudan	7.8	635	156
Ethiopia	6.9	914	33
Eritrea[4]	2.3	301	15
Kenya	1.3	163	(6)[3]
Djibouti	0.02	5	0
Total	**20.7**	**2,191**	**174**

1 Includes refugees, returnees, drought-affected and displaced persons dependent on free food distribution. 2 1992 food needs not covered by pledges as of 9 October. 3 Surplus. 4 In agreement with the government of Ethiopia, a referendum on independence for Eritrea is to be held in 1993.
Source: World Food Programme

The problem of meeting non-food needs is linked in part to the lack of recognition that relief, rehabilitation and development form part of a single continuum. "There is an urgent need, for example, to repair the water facilities and to restore electricity, which are often considered as non-emergency requirements," said Mr. Eliasson. "And yet if we don't deal with these problems in the emergency phase, we are causing enormous pain for the people, and an enormous displacement from their homes and villages — which in turn multiplies the cost to donors of providing emergency relief.

"Emergency relief can be viewed as a humiliating handout unless it also promotes development and provides hope for the future."

"So we must build in the development dimension in relief operations as early as possible," he continued. Emergency relief can be viewed as a humiliating handout for those receiving assistance "unless it builds an element of hope for the future." Mr. Eliasson said that he was particularly pleased, therefore, that during his September visit to Somalia, decisions were made on the spot by the UN Development Programme to establish offices in Mogadishu and Hargeisa.

"The response of the United Nations to the humanitarian challenge will determine its relevance in the new international environment."

To help prevent complex emergencies the UN needs to work out mechanisms of early warning and quick mobilization. Mr. Eliasson said that for the moment he could not speak of dramatic breakthroughs as a result of his new office. "The problem right now is that the UN in the humanitarian field is vastly overstretched. We are jumping from one crisis to another, we are very few people, working many, many hours a day, and we have not had the possibility of focusing on the early warning and prevention side that we must turn to, and which, of course, requires work in the area of peace-making and preventive diplomacy as well."

But Mr. Eliasson hoped that if the UN was successful in developing a more effective role in the humanitarian field it would "send a message of hope to people who are, or will be, in distress as a result of internal strife."

Mr. Eliasson stressed that his office had a coordinating role and did not have an operational brief. The establishment of the office in no way changed the mandates of the UN agencies which are active in relief work and for whose staff Mr. Eliasson expressed great admiration.

"But the pressures sometimes tell," he pointed out. "In the face of unbearable human suffering, there is inevitable anxiety and nervousness about our abilities to meet the challenges, and that can cause some strains, even in-fighting. That is not surprising. So I would like to bring about an intensified culture of cooperation whereby the UN can not only project an image of unity but also benefit from such unity and coordinated action, which would in turn reduce internal friction. We all gain in working together, and lose when we don't."

Mr. Eliasson conceded that coordination inside the UN has always been difficult, given

the mandates of the various agencies. "I do not ask for a centralization of power; we need to delegate authority in order to react quickly. But one thing is essential, which is that we must work in the same direction, and that there be a certain division of labour among the agencies and entities concerned."

Mr. Eliasson has been given four instruments to bring about more effective coordination:

- The creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, with a high-priority mandate, linked closely to the Secretary-General;
- The $50 mn Central Emergency Revolving Fund to allow the UN to react quickly to disasters before appeals are launched;
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which will meet two to three times a year under Mr. Eliasson's chairmanship, with additional meetings of deputies;
- The consolidated appeal to donors, which eliminates the individual appeals of agencies and allows a process of consolidation and prioritization.

Even with better coordination, Mr. Eliasson said the UN's work on complex emergencies cannot succeed without the regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had frequently emphasized their responsibilities, Mr. Eliasson pointed out. "We also need to work closely with those national leaders working to end hostilities...and indeed with the parties involved in civil war." There must be a moral and ethical code in such wars, which is to respect the safety of those doing humanitarian work: "The law of the jungle cannot be allowed to move into this area," he added.

Bringing about cooperation

In conclusion, Mr. Eliasson repeated that there must be a division of labour among all the actors. "It would be foolish to look to the UN alone to resolve such crises." A single child's death is a failure for all concerned, "so we must all mobilize all efforts to bring about relief and development." And that mobilization is required not just in humanitarian crises, but in dealing with the daunting problems of poverty, violence, and environmental degradation as well, he added.

In this task, the UN has a very central role, Mr. Eliasson said. "It is the whole embodiment of the idea that we are one earth, one globe, that we belong together and that solidarity, and even enlightened self-interest, requires global cooperation. Bringing about such cooperation is the special challenge of all those working in the UN." ■

Strengthened Somalia relief effort threatened by continued fighting

250,000 more could still die by year end

By Ernest Harsch

An intensified international relief operation to get food and medicine to the stricken people of Somalia is now under way. But renewed large-scale fighting in the south and insecurity elsewhere in the country threaten to further disrupt famine relief activities, as death rates again climb alarmingly.

The United Nations launched a "100-Day Action Programme" on 12 October to deliver a "massive infusion of food aid" to Somalia and spur an accelerated and more coordinated response on the part of UN agencies, donor governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Ships and aircraft filled with aid began arriving in Somalia with greater frequency, yet uncertainties about the operation were heightened not only by the war, but also by the unexpected resignation in late October of the UN official in charge, Mr. Mohamed Sahnoun. The UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali speedily named a new Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador Ismat Kittani, to direct the UN's political and humanitarian work in the ravaged country.

The Somalia famine is already among the worst to have hit any African country in recent years, with Mr. Boutros-Ghali estimating that "300,000 people have already died" since November 1991 — out of a total population of just 5-6 million. Another 250,000 may die before the end of the year without a successful escalation of humanitarian efforts and adequate security to protect relief operations from attack and looting, according to UN estimates. Overall, some 4.5 million Somalis need some form of emergency assistance. One million of them are refugees, mostly in neighbouring Kenya.

Only an urgent and sustained international effort can avert a worsening of what is already an "unparalleled disaster," Mr. Salahuddin Ahmed of the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) told a coordinating meeting in Geneva on the 100-day programme. As part of the ac-

WFP/Paul Mitchell

Efforts to prevent more famine deaths are being threatened by renewed fighting.

celerated effort, the WFP and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will seek to deliver and distribute some 50,000 tonnes of food per month, while the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other UN agencies and NGOs tackle other aspects of the complex relief operation.

Children most vulnerable

Children account for many of those who have already died, and at least 1 million are at serious risk from malnutrition. In some areas of the "hunger zone" of central and southern Somalia, where civil war has had the gravest impact, up to 80 per cent of all children under five suffer from severe malnutrition. Even if grains and other regular foods become available, this will not help many of the children, since their emaciated bodies can no longer handle such bulky foods as maize-meal, rice or beans. "Specific high-energy foods for children are needed," says Mr. Ian Mcleod, a UNICEF official in Mogadishu.

UN Secretary-General's new Special Representative for Somalia Ismat Kittani. Far right, UN lands food for Somali relief operation.

WFP/Paul Mitchel

It is estimated that at least 60 per cent of Somalia's basic infrastructure has been destroyed, and 80 per cent of all social services have been rendered non-operational, including sanitation. Only 15 of the country's 70 hospitals are functioning at all, and even they lack medicines, equipment and electricity. As a result, disease is spreading. A fact-finding team from the NGO Médecins sans frontières, which surveyed many of the war-ravaged villages between Baidoa and Bardera in the south, found that diarrhoea, lung infections and scabies were contributing to appallingly high mortality rates among children.

Shattered economy

Because of the war and massive population movements, much of Somalia's economy has been shattered, depriving large sectors of the population of any means of livelihood. Only in the north are markets continuing to function. Farmers have been unable to plant and fighting has destroyed irrigation systems and seed stocks, reducing harvests to just a fraction of their normal yields. And for a society that is largely pastoral, the loss of a third of all livestock from thirst and disease has compounded the food shortages and will make recovery from the crisis even more difficult.

According to the former UN Special Representative for Somalia, Mr. Sahnoun, the international community's initial delay in responding to this mounting tragedy was caused by a number of factors. One was the departure of most embassies, UN agencies and other international institutions from Mogadishu as a result of the intense fighting last year, which meant that the world community was not fully aware of the situation. Additionally, Mr. Sahnoun told *Africa Recovery* in a telephone interview from Mogadishu prior to his resignation, "It was the end of the Cold War, and people, including the mass media, were interested much more in the European crisis. I think there was a neglect as far as Somalia was concerned."

NGOs have frequently made similar points. According to Mr. Michael Aaronson, Overseas Director of the UK-based Save the Children Fund (SCF), it was a "lack of political will" on the part of the international community as a whole that permitted a difficult situation to become catastrophic. "Over a period of 18 months," he told *Africa Recovery*, "Somalia has slid inexorably into a mass famine, and that could have been avoided."

To head off similar delays in the future, Mr. Sahnoun urged that the UN strengthen its early-warning capabilities, so that it can rapidly send experts into a crisis situation, assess it, alert the Secretary-General and the Security Council, inform the press and mobilize public opinion. "The UN can play a catalyst role, and not wait until the situation deteriorates and becomes very, very difficult to resolve," he said.

Security essential

The crisis in Somalia is "unique" in the history of UN relief efforts, say UN officials. The political chaos, widespread banditry and extent of physical destruction have not only constrained the delivery of relief supplies but also endangered the lives of Somali and international relief workers. A number have been killed.

Apparent progress in stemming deaths from starvation and disease can be quickly reversed. In the southwestern town of Bardera, for example, renewed fighting in October between the forces of General Morgan and those of General Aidid led to the looting of food stocks and the evacuation of many relief personnel. Aid workers estimate that deaths from starvation have consequently climbed as high as 300 per day.

The capital has been divided by rival militias, and throughout the country there are a dozen or more factions, some of which are themselves rent by internal divisions. On top of this, there are marauding groups of bandits.

Security is therefore a prime consideration, to ensure that food and other relief supplies actually get to those who most need them. In mid-September, the first security personnel of a 500-man Pakistani contingent arrived in Mogadishu with the goal of protecting the port and airport, as well as the unloading and transport of relief supplies. The UN Security Council in August authorized the dispatch of another 3,000 security personnel, with 750 to be based in each of four operational zones.

However, both the deployment of the

Chronology of a famine

December 1990 - Two-year civil war reaches capital, Mogadishu.

January 1991 - President Mohammed Siad Barre overthrown by rebel forces. Amid continuing violence, UN and other international personnel evacuate from Mogadishu.

May - UN issues emergency appeal for Africa, including 130,000 tonnes of food for Somalia. Somali National Movement proclaims independent state of Somaliland in northwest, but not recognized by any country.

June - FAO reports depletion of food stocks in urban areas, worsening rural food shortages and starvation deaths.

July - UN mission visits Somalia to assess needs. FAO projects 1991/92 food import requirements at 500,000 tonnes.

August - UNICEF reestablishes office in Mogadishu.

November - Fighting erupts in Mogadishu between clan-based factions of the United Somali Congress, led by General Aidid and interim president Ali Mahdi Mohamed.

January 1992 - Dr. Martinka Pampalova, UNICEF health professional, is killed in northern Somalia.

February - ICRC warns famine is "on the horizon," with 4 million Somalis suffering from food shortages. Several Somali factions meet under UN aegis in New York to discuss ceasefire.

March - Ceasefire takes effect in Mogadishu. WFP and UNICEF begin joint airlift of supplementary food into Somalia.

8-9 April - Summit of heads of state of Horn of Africa in Addis Ababa to discuss regional cooperation on famine, refugee and other humanitarian problems.

April - Security Council calls for deployment of 50 unarmed military observers to Mogadishu to monitor ceasefire. Proposal to dispatch 500 armed UN guards to protect relief operation stalled.

4 May - Appointed as Special Representative a week earlier, Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun arrives in Mogadishu to establish headquarters of UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).

31 May-3 June - Leaders of many Somali parties meet in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, and pledge cooperation with international relief efforts.

5 July - First of 50 UN observers arrive in Mogadishu.

27 July - Following 22 July report by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Security Council approves urgent UN relief airlift and dispatch of 500 UN security personnel.

28 August - Security Council authorizes dispatch of additional 3,000 UN security personnel.

14 September - First of 500 UN security personnel arrive in Mogadishu.

12-13 October - UN's 100-Day Action Programme for accelerated humanitarian assistance to Somalia launched.

30 October - Ambassador Ismat Kittani named new Special Representative for Somalia, following Mr. Sahnoun's resignation.

security personnel already in Mogadishu and the dispatch of the remainder have been blocked by objections from certain factions, despite intensive efforts to negotiate agreement. Mr. Sahnoun told the Geneva coordinating meeting that zonal political offices would soon be opened in Mogadishu, Bossaso, Hargeisa and Kismayo to promote reconciliation at regional levels, and that Somali leaders in Bossaso had signed an agreement for the deployment of 750 UN security personnel to protect the port there and ensure the delivery of food and rehabilitation assistance to that region.

"Over a period of 18 months Somalia has slid inexorably into a mass famine, and that could have been avoided."

Michael Aaronson, Save the Children

Without national reconciliation, such efforts will be wasted, Mr. Sahnoun said; "Somalia will become a bottomless pit into which the donor community will continue to pour humanitarian assistance with no end in sight."

In their efforts towards ending the fighting, UN officials have consulted closely with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), League of Arab States, other regional organizations and neighbouring governments. From 31 May to 3 June leaders from a number of the main Somali factions met in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, at the invitation of the Ethiopian government, to work toward a political solution and address humanitarian concerns. Senegalese President Abdou Diouf, the current OAU Chairman, has suggested that an international conference be held under the aegis of the UN, OAU and other organizations to establish a framework for peace in Somalia.

Breaking the 'vicious cycle'

If peace and security are vital for effective, countrywide relief operations, massive infusions of food and other assistance may in turn improve the conditions for peace, officials point out. According to Mr. Boutros-Ghali, in a report to the Security Council, it is necessary to break the "vicious cycle" in Somalia, in which insecurity prevents food deliveries and food shortages in turn contribute to the violence.

So parallel to the on-going political initiatives, the UN's 100-Day Action Programme seeks to flood Somalia with food aid. The WFP will deliver some 100,000 tonnes to the central and southern regions, while the ICRC and other donors are providing additional amounts.

Further food resources will be made available for distribution, including through markets, in the regions north of the "hunger line" (see map, page 9).

South of the line, however, where there has been a virtual total collapse of administration, markets and economic activities and most people are dependent on free food distribution, a greater and more direct involvement by relief organizations is needed.

Besides food, the accelerated programme provides for basic health services (including an aggressive measles vaccination campaign), clean water supplies for people and livestock, shelter materials in anticipation of the rainy season and projects to create employment opportunities and rebuild the agricultural and livestock sectors. Seeking to link rehabilitation with immediate relief — and looking ahead to the country's economic and social recovery — the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies will provide farmers with seeds, support Somali professionals, help develop local institutional capacity and aid the emergence of community organizations. The total costs of the accelerated programme are estimated at nearly $83 mn.

The various UN agencies, which were already moving toward greater and more effective coordination prior to the 100-day programme, will significantly increase their field staffs, with a clear division of labour (see box, page 9).

In addition, the UN has urged donor governments not only to contribute to the UN operation, but also to carry out their own actions, in a coordinated fashion. France, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Germany, Canada, Belgium and other countries have contributed money and food. The United States, which has committed $190 million in relief assistance to Somalia, launched its own airlift operation in August, to deliver relief supplies into Somalia and to the refugee areas of northern Kenya.

NGOs at the forefront

The most significant coordination is between the UN and the various NGOs active in Somalia, a relationship symbolized by the October appointment of Mr. Philip Johnston, President of CARE USA, as Operational Manager of the 100-day programme. The NGOs are carrying out much of the actual food distribution to local communities, running nutrition programmes and staffing health centres. In just

UN operations in Somalia

UN Operation for Somalia (UNOSOM) — Headed by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador Ismat Kittani. Security personnel commanded by Brig. Gen. Imtiaz Shaheen of Pakistan. Dr. Philip Johnston Operational Manager for 100-Day Action Programme.

Department of Humanitarian Affairs — Office in Somalia headed by Mr. David Bassiouni. Responsible for overseeing and coordinating all UN humanitarian interventions.

World Food Programme — Overall responsibility for logistics coordination and the delivery of food. Director of Operations inside Somalia is Mr. Holbrook Arthur, and head of logistics, based in Nairobi, is Mr. Dieter Hannusch.

UNICEF — Provides high-energy foods and assists supplementary feeding, supports primary health care programmes, aids rehabilitation of water and sanitation, among other relief activities. Represented in Mogadishu by Mr. Mark Stirling.

World Health Organization — Provides essential drugs for facilities not covered by UNICEF, seeks to strengthen capacity of local health institutions.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees — Coordinates cross-border operations out of Kenya and assists Somali refugees, as well as Somali returnees in northwest part of country.

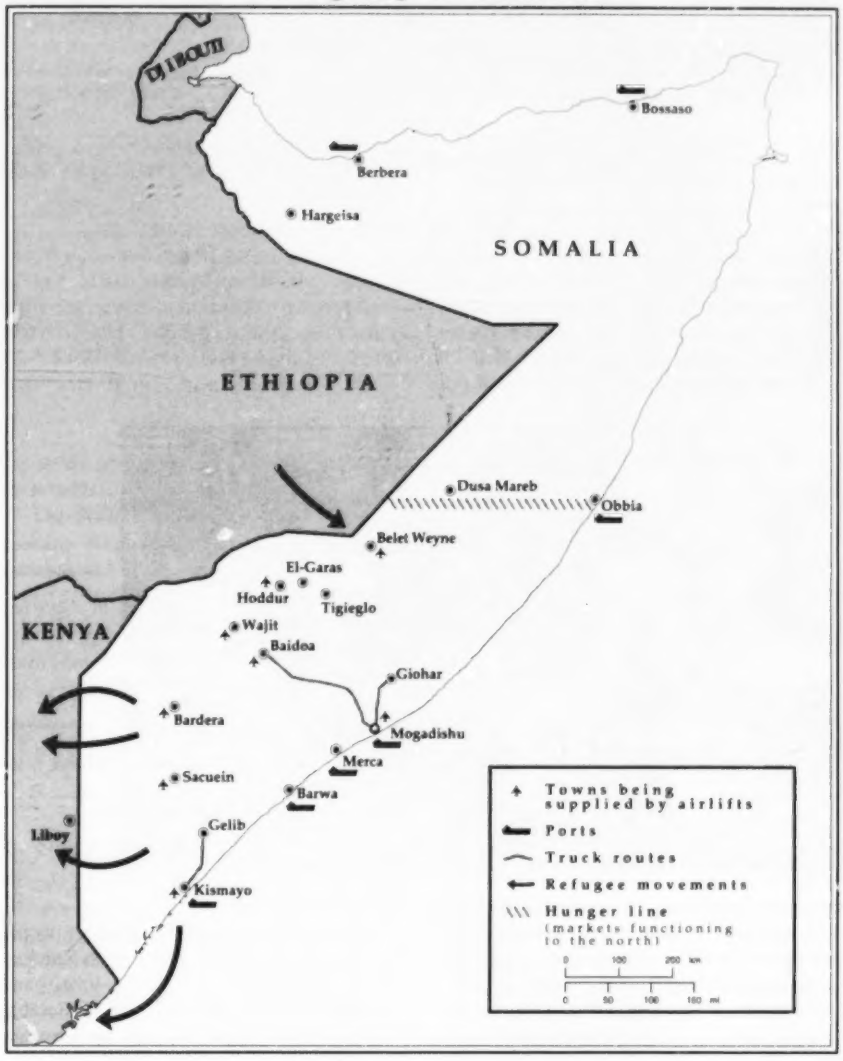
Food and Agriculture Organization — Supports recovery measures in agriculture and livestock sectors. Ensures provision of seeds, tools, insecticides and animal vaccines by UN and NGO agencies.

UN Development Programme — Supports recovery and rehabilitation programmes, reestablishing Mogadishu water supply. Also to initiate integrated rural development programmes, assist social sectors, develop local professional capacities, etc.

UNESCO and International Labour Organization — To help local communities reopen schools, training centres and institutions of higher learning.

UN-NGO Task Force — Comprising UN and NGO representatives, ensures effective division of labour in relief implementation.

Emergency in Somalia



one example of the division of labour that is being worked out between the UN agencies and the NGOs, CARE is in charge of distributing the food brought into Somalia by the WFP

The ICRC, SCF, CARE, Concern, Médecins sans frontières and others remained on the scene even through periods of intense fighting when other international organizations had evacuated their staffs. As the famine worsened, the NGOs expanded their own presence.

In southern Somalia, the SCF runs emergency mother and child health clinics and supplementary feeding programmes for severely malnourished children. In the northwest, where portions of the previous administration still function, it provides technical advisors for the health, education and agriculture sectors.

There has been a strong response to its public appeals for aid to Somalia, the SCF says. In addition to £2 mn from SCF organizations in other countries, it raised £3 mn in the UK, either directly or through a broader appeal for Africa launched by the Disasters Emergency Committee, comprising seven NGOs. "There's a lot of talk about 'compassion fatigue,'" the SCF's Mr. Aaronson notes, "but when it comes to the crunch, people are still sufficiently moved and want to help. The public response has been dramatic."

Red Cross operations

The ICRC operates the largest of all the NGO programmes in Somalia, providing both food and medical assistance. Currently it brings in nearly 20,000 tonnes of food per month by ship, aircraft and truck, to cover the needs of more than 1 million Somalis. Since early in the year the ICRC has vastly expanded its network of communal kitchens, now numbering 500 around the country and feeding 600,000 people a day.

Among other NGO efforts to get agricultural inputs to Somali farmers, Concern has distributed seeds in the Baidoa area and Oxfam, in a joint programme with UNICEF, has done likewise in Jubaland.

"It is abundantly clear that non-governmental organizations play a critical role in providing humanitarian aid to Somalia," the UN Secretary-General has stressed. ■

Zambian villagers struggle with drought

Economic reforms complicate relief efforts

By Mercedes Sayagues in Namwala

In villages all over the south of Zambia, peasants tell similar stories of loss and despair following the savage drought that has stricken not only Zambia, but countries throughout Southern Africa.

Rona Mungogwe was doing fine until this year. She could feed her five small children with the yield of her 10-acre farm, and also buy clothes for the children and agricultural tools. But in January and February the rains failed to come. The maize Ms. Mungogwe had labouriously planted germinated, only to die. Although the rains returned in March, it was too late for anything to grow. The parched land yielded only two tins of groundnuts.

The village well has also dried up. Now Ms. Mungogwe and her daughters must walk one and a half kilometres to a dam where cattle and people share the stagnant water.

Food prices had already skyrocketed before the drought, when state subsidies were removed under the new government's structural adjustment programme. The drought made food scarce and yet more expensive. With no money to buy food, the Mungogwes survived for months on *nshima*, or maize-meal porridge, without meat or vegetables. By June the family had consumed its grain reserves, including those kept for seeds. From being self-sufficient, they have crossed the threshold into absolute poverty.

Nationally, about 70 per cent of Zambia's crops were wiped out by the drought, and the country will need to import more than 1 mn tonnes of food for its people. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that about 1.7 million people will require free food during part of the year.

Although the drought is hurting people hard, there will not be a famine in Zambia. The government has mounted a timely and well-organized drought relief effort. Food is reaching those in need. As early as February, President Frederick Chiluba declared a national emergency, the first leader in the region to do so, and requested food aid, estimated at 820,000 tonnes. About 90 per cent is to be sold commercially and the remainder distributed to subsistence farmers and malnourished children, through local authorities, the WFP and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Overall numbers may help indicate the scale of the problem in Zambia, but they do not tell the individual dramas unfolding in the clusters of conical ochre-painted huts that dot the flat Zambian plateau.

In the village of Sebagane, a strange silence greets the arriving visitor. It takes a while to realize that what is missing is the rhythmic pounding of maize, the songs and banter that make the women's chore lighter. The village granaries are empty, there is no maize to be pounded, no money to buy it.

Judge John Sebagane, the village headman, worries more about the lack of water. The Macha dam, damaged last year by violent rains, is useless. The nearby stream is reduced to a pool of dirty water. The villagers are digging shallow wells in the river bed. During the night, water seeps through the sand and fills the buckets.

From a village on the north bank of the Kafue River, Leni Lutambo sets out with her underweight baby every two weeks by foot and canoe for a six-hour trip to Namwala. There she queues at the local health clinic for a hot serving for her baby and a week's supply of high-protein porridge for the rest of her family, including eight other children.

"We have no food in our village," says Ms. Lutambo. She gathers wild roots that are mildly poisonous unless boiled for many hours. Her husband used to poach for zebra and antelope, but they now have no money for bullets. For Ms. Lutambo, the assistance at the Namwala clinic will be cut off come the onset of the rainy season in November, when the town is no longer accessible to villagers on the north bank of the Kafue. So before the rains come, enough maize must be trucked in to the area to sustain people until the next harvest in March.

The Namwala clinic previously fed some 40 malnourished children every week, but now the protein supplement provided by WFP is given to all the under-fives who show up. "There is no food in the homes," explains nurse Rosemary Bubala. "People are surviving by the grace of God." Unfortunately, the supplementary food turns out to be the main or only meal for many of the children.

Another form of relief is provided near the Macha Mission, close to Ms. Mungogwe's village. Every morning Ms. Mungogwe and 3,000 others in the district can be found digging latrines, repairing roads and making bricks. For this work they receive a family ration for five people of 2.5 kilos of maize per day. Mothers can bring their under-fives to eat

WFP/Mercedes Sayagues

In return for food rations, Zambian women participate in road repair and other food-for-work projects.

Mercedes Sayagues is an information officer for the World Food Programme, based in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Mozambique worst hit in Southern Africa

If the rains return to Southern Africa in the next weeks (and some have already come to Zimbabwe), most countries of the region will be able to avert widespread starvation — with the notable exception of war-torn Mozambique, where the threat of massive famine still looms.

In the 10 countries of the region — Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe — more than 18 million people need emergency food aid. Donors have responded generously to a June appeal issued jointly by the UN and the 10 Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) states. As of late September, donors had pledged 1.4 mn tonnes of food against the 1.8 mn needed for direct distribution through the end of the year, and more than $600 mn of the $854 mn required for transport, medicines and other emergency aid.

However, only 1.2 mn tonnes had been pledged towards the 2.5 mn needed for sale through markets, and there have been delays in translating the pledges into shipments, with only 20 per cent of the required food aid having arrived in Southern African ports as of 1 September. Pledges for non-food aid have also been poor, thus far covering only 18 per cent of water and health needs and 1 per cent of those for agriculture (seeds are especially needed for the October-November planting season).

In Mozambique, 3.2 million people need free food, and another 6 million depend on food aid sold in local markets. One million Mozambicans have taken refuge in neighbouring Malawi in recent years, and another half million have crossed the border into South Africa since the onset of the drought. With access to major areas of Mozambique cut off by war and some food convoys coming under attack, relief distribution has been hampered and reports of starvation deaths are mounting. Mozambican and international aid officials hope that the recent peace agreement between the government and insurgent forces (see page 36) will facilitate more effective relief operations.

a nutritious porridge during a mid-morning break. Often local health workers use the opportunity to weigh and screen the children.

"Whoever works has food to take home," says Mr. Nelson Mulongo, a 50-year-old farmer with two wives, 15 children and a 6 hectare farm that yielded nothing this year. "Working for food is OK. And after receiving food, we have something," he adds, indicating the small dam he is helping to build.

Zambia's relief operation has its share of hitches, however. Bureaucratic hassles that result from the change from a controlled economy heavily reliant on parastatals to a more open market economy have hampered the relief effort. "Cooperative unions" responsible for delivering maize to rural depots and releasing it locally have been dubbed "uncooperatives." Poor communications between the capital and remote districts slow down the delivery process.

An incident in Namwala highlights the problems. The head of the Namwala drought relief had a voucher for maize that the manager of the local cooperative union depot refused to honour, and the bank manager demanded three weeks to verify a cheque that would enable the committee to hire a truck and buy fuel. The phones were out of order, so in desperation the committee's head hitched a ride to Lusaka, six hours away, to unravel the maze. The problems in Namwala were eventually solved, as they usually are elsewhere, thanks largely to the government's decision to use NGOs to deliver the food to the people in need.

Beyond the provision of immediate food relief, the Zambian government and donor agencies have also been looking anxiously ahead to the next planting season. In the hopes that the drought will break, they are providing Zambian farmers with input packages, including seeds, so that they will be able to replant their fields.

The WFP, for example, is drawing on an existing sorghum seed project to provide farmers with seeds through its drought emergency operation. Many of the drought-related food-for-work projects aim to dig or rehabilitate canals and small dams, to catch the rains when — and if — they come.

The drought, combined with the effects of structural adjustment, could be a lethal combination for Zambia's new democracy. How Rona Mungogwe, Leni Lutambo and their families fare this hard drought year, and whether they will be able to recover once the rains return, can spell disaster or hope for Zambia. ■

Urban self-help benefits poor women

By Daniel Lubinga in Lusaka

In Kanyama, a shantytown on the edge of Lusaka, work teams of women residents have been busy mending roads, clearing storm drains and carrying out other tasks to improve their community. Since they are paid for their labour with food provided through a project of WFP, the initiative is especially welcome during the drought.

This food-for-work effort has provided one way to target food aid towards the neediest residents. "Only the poorest people are willing to work for food," says Ms. Victoria Mambwe, the project coordinator.

Launched in 1990 as a means of helping vulnerable groups overcome the effects of structural adjustment, Project Urban Self Help (PUSH) currently employs some 3,800 participants in Lusaka and Ndola, 95 per cent of them women. Its two main aims are to prevent malnutrition by ensuring that members of the poorest families can obtain their basic food requirements; and to enable the shantytown residents to improve sanitation and surface-water drainage, thus curbing the incidence of cholera, dysentry, malaria and other water-borne diseases.

PUSH is executed by a local non-governmental organization (NGO), the Human Settlement of Zambia, which acts as an umbrella organization for some 20 NGOs involved in 40 mini-projects. Decisions about what work is to be undertaken rests with the local communities.

During the first phase of the project, which ended in March, the WFP provided food for 950,000 working days (worth about $1.6 mn), while additional assistance in the form of equipment and technical assistance was donated by Australia, Sweden, Canada and the UN Development Programme. The Zambian government, through its Social Action Programme, provided 60 mn kwacha ($300,000) in counterpart funds. Although the women participants are without previous construction experience, about 70 per cent of the project's initial targets were attained.

Due to such impressive achievements, donors are planning to greatly expand their support. The WFP is in the process of approving an allocation of food for 7.8 mn workdays (worth $13 mn) over the next five years. At the request of the Zambian government, much of this will be provided early on to support up to 10,000 participants during 1992-93, when the need is expected to be greatest. ■

Priorities for African food security

The drought in Eastern and Southern Africa has starkly shown the continent's vulnerable food situation. A new briefing paper by Africa Recovery discusses what can be done to make people more food secure, while a recent conference in Washington called for greater attention and resources for Africa's food production sector.

Despite prevalent images of hunger and famine in Africa, the continent has the capacity to achieve food security for its people, argues Mr. Simon Maxwell, who heads the Food Security Unit at the Institute of Development Studies in the UK. "The key is to recognize the complexity of food insecurity and create environments in which food insecure people can achieve secure and sustainable livelihoods," he writes in a recently published Africa Recovery Briefing Paper.*

"In some countries — notably Somalia and Mozambique — a deadly mix of drought and war has brought starvation deaths to alarming levels," Mr. Maxwell notes. Because of the significant role that war has played in aggravating famine situations, "Peace is an essential precondition of food security in much of Africa."

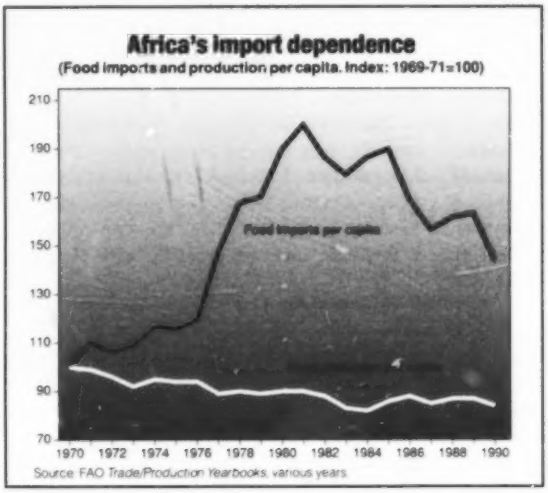
But the situation is serious even without war or drought. Nearly half of sub-Saharan Africa's total population lives in households suffering from food deprivation.

Contrary to popular view, agricultural and food production have both increased in Africa since 1970, and in fact at about the same rate as in the rest of the world. However, unlike elsewhere, production has risen more slowly than population. As a result, agricultural and food production per capita have fallen by about 15 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa since 1970, while food imports per head have had to rise to maintain consumption (see graph). Despite much effort and research, therefore, Africa's self-sufficiency in food declined during the past two decades.

Who are the food insecure?

Across Africa, small farmers and their families account for the largest group of people afflicted by food insecurity; even in agricultural surplus areas they may not have the productive resources or incomes to ensure adequate food for all household members. However, in many countries the profile of the food insecure is changing, with an increasing share comprised of war refugees, displaced people, poor pastoralists, the landless, the urban poor and members of female-headed households.

There is broad agreement that African countries must achieve greater agricultural growth. This can not only provide people with more food, jobs and savings, but because of agriculture's large contribution to most African economies can also help spur economic growth more broadly. Even if policies to improve agricultural incentives do not focus specifically on food, evidence indicates that food production is also likely to benefit.



However, stresses Mr. Maxwell, growth by itself may not be enough. Those living in absolute poverty, in households suffering from labour shortages or in neglected resource-poor areas may receive no real material benefit. Moreover, structural adjustment policies, which may offer some potential for long-term gains, nevertheless have often increased the immediate food insecurity of vulnerable groups.

Successful agricultural growth strategies should lay particular emphasis on generating jobs and incomes for the poorest groups. This will usually mean investing most resources in small-scale agriculture.

Successful agricultural growth strategies, argues the Briefing Paper, should "lay particular emphasis on generating jobs and incomes for the poorest groups. This will usually mean investing most resources in small-scale agriculture."

Whether food security necessarily means an emphasis on food production has long been a matter of sharp debate, observes Mr. Maxwell. Many African governments have tended to stress self-sufficiency in domestic food production, which has been considered vital not only for food security, but also as a step towards economic self-reliance and greater political independence. Against this view, others have maintained that where African countries enjoy a comparative advantage, they should rather maximize the efficiency and output of their export sectors, and then use their foreign earnings to import more food, as well as agricultural inputs.

Mr. Maxwell argues that a balance needs to be struck between food and cash crops. He notes that while some critics have associated cash crops with worsening asset and income distribution, they have nevertheless been grown successfully on small farms in Africa, using labour-intensive methods. The higher income they generate can be used not only to buy more food, but also to buy inputs for greater food crop production. However, some particular cash crops may be poor choices because of glutted world markets and declining prices.

Efficient food marketing systems are another key element toward achieving greater food security. Many international aid agencies, including the World Bank, have argued that public sector intervention in cereal and other markets should be kept to a minimum, giving way to private traders. However, observes the Briefing Paper, private food marketing systems in Africa are often weak, especially in the marginal areas where food insecurity is most severe.

State efforts therefore remain important, Mr. Maxwell argues. They should be directed towards a carefully phased liberalization, with grain marketing parastatals acting as buyers

Copies of the Briefing Paper, "Food security in Africa: Priorities for reducing hunger," can be obtained from Africa Recovery.

and sellers of last resort and gradually withdrawing as the private sector expands.

To ensure that the poorest and most food insecure are not left out, social welfare transfers and safety nets need to be improved. These have often incurred high costs in Africa, and have sometimes benefited better-off urban populations rather than the poor and the rural. Targeting should therefore be improved, argues the Briefing Paper, and ways need to be found to bring down costs. Public works scheme are an especially effective form of food security intervention, according to Mr. Maxwell, since they provide an income transfer to poor employees while at the same time contributing to longer-term development goals (see page 11).

Responding to famine emergencies

To help speed donor response to famine emergencies, early warning systems should be strengthened, while national preparedness can be improved through early decisions on when to import food, establishing small locally-based stocks of food for relief distribution and other measures.

Even in non-famine periods, external food aid contributes significantly to food security on the continent, accounting for more than 20 per cent of food imports. It can be made more effective, Mr. Maxwell argues, through better management, more timely delivery and greater flexibility. Care should also be taken that food aid does not promote further import dependency, either by undermining incentives to local production (through lowering domestic market prices) or by biasing tastes towards imported commodities, like wheat.

Much can also be done to improve food security planning. This should be more modest than earlier attempts at over-centralized, top-down initiatives, which proved unwieldy and unsustainable. Rather, food security plans and policies should be built on a foundation of strong, decentralized, community-based and well-funded local initiatives.

Taken together, Mr. Maxwell concludes, the new food security policies now being proposed or initiated can provide a basis for action "which moves beyond the desperate short-term approach of famine relief in Africa, to longer-term and more sustainable programmes which provide genuine food security." ■

UNICEF/Anne Marie Gaudras

Vegetable and fruit farm in Niger. To ensure food security for the poorest, strategies for agricultural growth must emphasize small-scale farming.

Asian lessons for African agriculture

By Nick Cater in Washington

The economic success of Asian nations that have emphasized domestic food resources holds vital lessons for Africa, argued speakers at a meeting on African agriculture.

"Exports are very important," Prof. Peter Timmer of Harvard University told the gathering of government ministers, donor officials and academics, but added that in Asia, "governments learned how to manage the economic development process by solving food problems — not by solving coffee export problems. A government that takes solving food problems seriously is seen to be competent — learns how to be competent — in a wide range of economic activities."

The August meeting in Washington was organized by the Japanese-supported Sasakawa Africa Association and the Global 2000 organization of former US President Jimmy Carter. Based on techniques used in the Asian green revolution, Sasakawa Global 2000, the joint programme operated by the two organizations in Africa, provides farmers with improved seeds, fertilizer, credit and advice.

Most problems must be addressed by farmers themselves, said Prof. Adebayo Adedeji, Executive Director of the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (and until recently head of the UN's Economic Commission for Africa). But he also urged African governments to adopt policies to shift away from "colonial crops" such as coffee and cocoa, toward more food production, otherwise "the starvation we see today will be child's play in comparison to the crises to come."

Former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo stressed that "investment is a strategic imperative for development," arguing that an emerging "new class of African entrepreneurs" can play a major role in tearing down barriers to trade, especially among African nations.

Among others, Mr. Kevin Cleaver, in charge of African agriculture for the World Bank, was critical of donor policy, arguing that externally funded projects had an "embarrassing rate of failure" because of their complexity, poor management and reliance on expatriate advisers. In addition, "the World Bank, like most other donors, is reducing its emphasis on agriculture," he said. "It's moving in the wrong direction as we become enamoured with other things, like the environment, like industry."

Many speakers supported aspects of the structural adjustment policies promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Prof. Francis Idachaba, vice-chancellor of Nigeria's Makurdi Agricultural University, for example, pointed to the inefficiencies and distortions associated with fertilizer subsidies. It was important, he said, to break "opposition to the disengagement of government from fertilizer procurement and distribution." ■

New drive to protect Africa's children

Dakar conference will propose redirecting aid budgets towards human development priorities

With prospects of increased aid flows for African countries rapidly diminishing as the industrialized countries continue to struggle with their own economies and establish new international priorities, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) are embarking on a major new effort to find the resources urgently needed to alleviate the severe health and education crisis of African children. The effort focuses on restructuring both African government budgets and development assistance programmes in order to focus more resources on "human development priorities."

Proposals for such a restructuring, as well as a number of National Programmes of Action formulated by African countries to meet the goals agreed at the 1990 World Summit for Children held at the UN, will be formally presented at the OAU's international conference on assistance to African children in Dakar, Senegal, 25-27 November. Africa is the first continent to launch such a drive in the wake of the World Summit.

According to an OAU-UNICEF study prepared for the conference, only 6.5 per cent of bilateral aid goes to basic education, health, nutrition and related human development sectors. If this ratio was increased to 20 per cent, asserts the study, it would dramatically alter the social environment for Africa's children. Such an improvement would not only reverse the havoc caused to children's well-being by the continent's severe, decade-long economic decline, it would "lay a new foundation for Africa's development in the 21st century," said OAU Secretary-General Salim Salim at a UN forum in September. Mr. Salim, and others connected with the study, argued not only for restructuring aid, but also for increases in development assistance, on which the success of most of Africa's economic reform programmes is dependent.

The predominant world view of Africa as a continent in perpetual crisis has obscured the substantial social and economic gains made before the current setbacks.

At the moment, only Norway's bilateral aid programme channels 20 per cent to social priorities, with Switzerland and Finland not far behind. If the average share of all aid from industrialized countries reached this 20 per cent figure, funds for social priorities from external sources alone would almost triple from about $1.23 bn to $3.52 bn (see table). Equivalent sums would become available if domestic expenditures on social priorities were increased to 8-10 per cent of gross national product (GNP), as the OAU and UNICEF will recommend.

Investment in human development

The fact-filled study — entitled *Africa's Children, Africa's Future: Human Investment Priorities for the 1990s* — argues that only real economic growth will lead to sustained improvement in children's well-being. But it asserts, as do the sectoral papers which accompany it, that such economic growth will only be brought about if nations can call upon literate, healthy and trained populations to implement the policies which will lead to economic revival.

Most important, the study contends that a new impetus for human development is available once again within Africa — and for Africa's external partners. This impetus stems

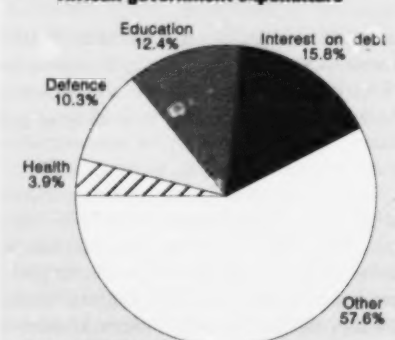
Boosting aid to social priorities

(1990 figures)

	Developing world		Sub-Saharan Africa		
	ODA as % of GNP	Social priorities as % of ODA	Total ODA ($ mn)	Current ODA to social priorities ($mn)	If 20% ODA to social priorities ($mn)
Australia	.34	2.0	70	1	10
Austria	.25	8.1	70	10	10
Belgium	.45	6.5	300	20	60
Canada	.44	10.9	430	50	90
Denmark	.93	10.6	300	30	60
Finland	.64	15.7	240	40	50
France	.55	4.0	4,050	160	810
Germany	.42	1.9	1,140	20	230
Ireland	.16	6.5	10	1	3
Italy	.32	8.5	1,090	90	220
Japan	.31	2.7	830	20	170
Netherlands	.94	9.4	620	60	120
New Zealand	.22	6.5	0	0	0
Norway	1.17	19.7	370	70	70
Sweden	.9	7.1	620	40	120
Switzerland	.31	18.1	220	40	40
UK	.27	8.8	540	50	110
USA	.21	8.3	1,010	80	200
Multilateral	n.a.	n.a.	5,700	440[1]	n.a.
Total	.35*	6.5*	17,620[2]	1,230	3,520

1. Actual figure higher, but data available for only 4 multilateral agencies. 2. Includes $120 mn from Arab countries. n.a. not applicable. *Bilateral only. Source: UNICEF

African government expenditure



Source: UNICEF

from Africa's determination to push ahead with tough policy reforms even in the absence of increased support. It also stems from the intensifying international consensus that the provision of health, education and other basic social services is not only a compelling moral concern, but also a requisite for economic growth.

UNICEF/Jorgen Schytte

Ensuring a safe, healthy environment for Africa's children must be the main concern of aid donors.

Early progress

Despite the predominant world view of Africa as a continent racked by drought, famine and political upheaval, the reality is more complex. Few regions in the world so quickly made gains in improving the lives of their children as Africa did in its first two decades of independence, despite the fact that in 1960 it was the world's most economically deprived continent. African countries raised health, education and other standards to levels that industrialized nations took more than a century to achieve. The continent raised life expectancy and reduced infant mortality steadily in the 1960s and 1970s. Primary school enrolment shot up in the 1970s.

However, for most African countries the 1980s were a lost decade for development, hitting children especially hard. Living standards declined, school enrolment rates fell, the quality of health care and basic services deteriorated. Economic crisis has hindered progress in these basic social sectors.

Today, one-third of the 40,000 children who die worldwide every day are African, although they constitute little more than 10 per cent of the world's child population. More children die every year in Mozambique than in all the countries of the former Soviet Union. Africa is the only continent where the status of children has deteriorated in recent years, and is currently expected to worsen as the weight of economic stagnation and decline takes a further toll.

Deteriorating health, education

Africa has the youngest and fastest-growing population in the world. Of the estimated 642 million people in Africa, roughly 47 per cent are children under 16 years of age. Africa's infant mortality rate is among the highest in the world, at 108 per 1,000 live births. While the average life expectancy of children born in Africa between 1990 and 1995 has risen to 54 years, an increase of 13 years since 1960, this figure still lags 20 years behind that of the industrialized world.

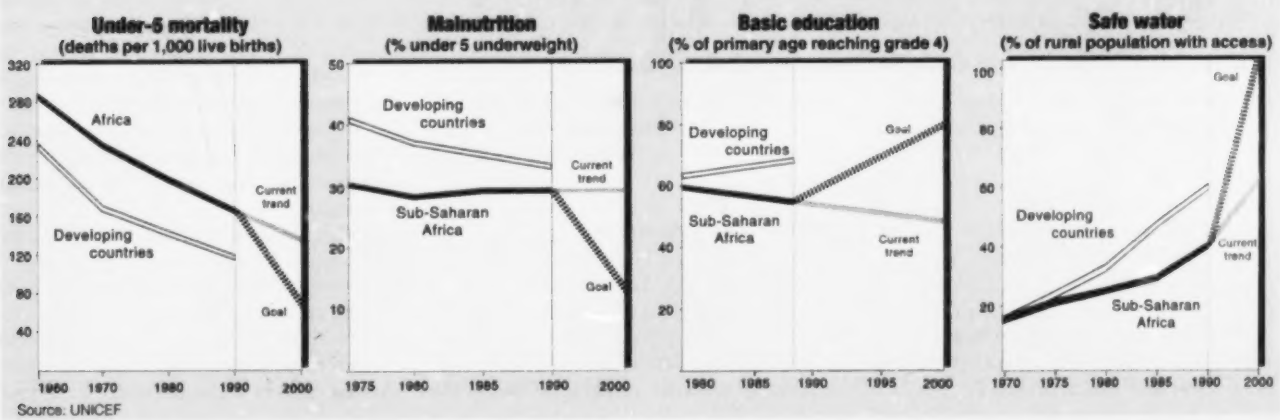
About 29 million African children, or one quarter of those under five, are currently underweight, and the growth of some 39 million children (35 per cent) has been stunted by poor nutrition with 10 per cent showing signs of wasting.

Although primary school enrolment rose dramatically during the 1970s, from 65 to 90 per cent for boys and from 44 to 69 per cent for girls, both these rates fell by roughly 7 per cent over the past decade, with the quality of education also showing signs of deterioration. Education spending per capita in developed countries is nearly 20 times that in Africa.

Annual health expenditure in the continent is $3.50 per capita, the lowest in the world, and

Goals for Africa's children

Goals based on targets set at 1990 World Summit for Children.



Source: UNICEF

only a little more than half of all of Africa's children have access to health services.

During the past decade per capita GNP fell by an average of more than 2 per cent per year, after rising steadily between 1965 and 1980. Crippling external debts, falling prices for commodity exports and structural adjustment programmes forced deep cuts in social spending, exemplified by declining per capita expenditures on health and education.

Children in the midst of war

In addition, war-related famine and drought continue to plague the continent. In 1991, six countries — Angola, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan, all of them torn by civil war — faced severe food shortages, with women and children accounting for 92 per cent of Africa's war-related deaths.

Africa's progress has also been affected by the pace of social change. While most Africans still live in rural communities, populations of urban areas are expected to double over the period 1985-2000, and the flight of many millions of rural people to towns and cities has overtaxed services and existing infrastructure. A growing number of children live on the streets of African capitals and suffer the social dislocations of homelessness, exploitation and abuse.

The AIDS epidemic is overstretching limited resources in many countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that some 6.5 million Africans are HIV-infected, among whom 750,000 are children. AIDS is soon expected to become the leading fatal disease among children, and the number of AIDS orphans is increasing exponentially.

Aid for urgent social needs would triple to $3.52 bn a year if donors channelled 20 per cent of their assistance to such priorities, as Norway does.

But even when they were overwhelmed by the natural disasters and economic catastrophes of the 1980s, most African countries embarked on far-reaching political and economic reforms directed towards laying a secure foundation for sustainable development. Since the early 1980s, African governments have also demonstrated their growing commitment to child survival, protection and development.

UNICEF/Roger Lemoyne

Discussing health-care in Sudan: community-based systems need more external support

National Programmes of Action

In the wake of the 1990 World Summit for Children, for which African leaders provided an early and crucial impetus, some 20 African countries have prepared national programmes of action (NPAs) to achieve the major and supporting goals for children set out in the Summit Plan of Action. NPAs are being prepared in another 27 countries. The NPAs pay particular attention to the phasing and prioritization of specific actions and in some cases have established important additional targets or areas for progress, for example in reducing gender disparities and controlling AIDS and malaria. They also respond to the World Summit challenge of restructuring national budgets in order to direct more resources towards children, and to seek ways to mobilize additional resources at both the community and national levels, while using existing ones more cost-effectively.

African countries are already putting into practice a range of relatively low-cost and cost-effective programme strategies for children and human development to attain the goals. Among these measures are:

National programmes of immunization against the six major childhood diseases — tuberculosis, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and polio. Two-thirds of African countries have achieved the goal of immunizing 75 per cent of their children against these illnesses, and the remaining one-third attained more than 50 per cent coverage, an increase from less than 20 per cent at the start of the 1980s.

Nutrition programmes for infants, small children and pregnant women to offset the incidence of low birth weight and provide nutritional supplements.

Programmes to control diarrhoeal diseases by providing access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, and to treat diarrhoeal dehydration.

Policies that support basic education and ensure equal access to schooling for girls as well as boys. The application of the innovative concept of "corridors of peace" in war zones, such as those in Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, where temporary ceasefires have allowed children to be immunized and food

and medicine to be distributed.

More and better-targeted resources

To carry this progress forward toward achievement of the World Summit goals for children in Africa, it is estimated that total financial resources on the order of $12.7 bn per year additional to current spending are needed on average over the 1990s. About two-thirds — $8.8 bn — is required for major sectoral programmes in health, education, nutrition, and water supply and sanitation. Half of this is to be met from domestic sources and the remainder by international aid resources and other action such as debt relief. In addition, almost $4 bn is needed per year for programmes to improve the situation of the poorest households, especially to countries afflicted by war, drought or other disasters.

A variety of approaches, based on the context of each African country, is needed to mobilize resources to achieve the goals. As a broad target, there is a need for an increase in domestic expenditures on social priorities — basic health, education and nutrition and their necessary supporting services — to levels equal to 8-10 per cent of GNP. Donors, who now allocated only about 6.5 per cent of their aid to these social priorities, need to increase that share to 20 per cent, as well as take measures to improve aid effectiveness and programme delivery.

A sustained, joint effort between African communities, their governments and the continent's international partners is necessary to promote and increase investment in human development and in the welfare of Africa's children — and its women, the main care-givers and decision-makers regarding children.

The immediate returns on investments in Africa's children will include an estimated 21 million young lives saved and many more spared debilitating childhood diseases. For the women of Africa this would save over 100,000 lives each year by the end of the decade, lives that would have been lost due to pregnancy-related causes. Over 90 million girls and women would have access to basic education and literacy and would have new opportunities to participate in the development of their countries. A higher rate of economic growth would result from the improved health, education and nutrition of children and women.

For Africa's children — rural and urban, male and female — the future may be filled with uncertainty; there is no lack of obstacles to their growth and development. But it is also filled with opportunities, and in country after country, hunger, illiteracy and ill health have receded when the political commitment of Africa's leaders to the needs of their children — and the support of the international community — have been strong. ■

Concern over under-5 deaths

New data being assembled by UNICEF reveal that under-five mortality rates (U5MR) in several countries have stopped declining, or are actually increasing. Zambia's U5MR increased by 25 per cent in the 1980s and by 1991 had reached 200 deaths per 1,000 live births. Nigeria and Uganda show no overall decrease in their U5MR during the 1980s, with the rates for both countries at around 190 in 1991.

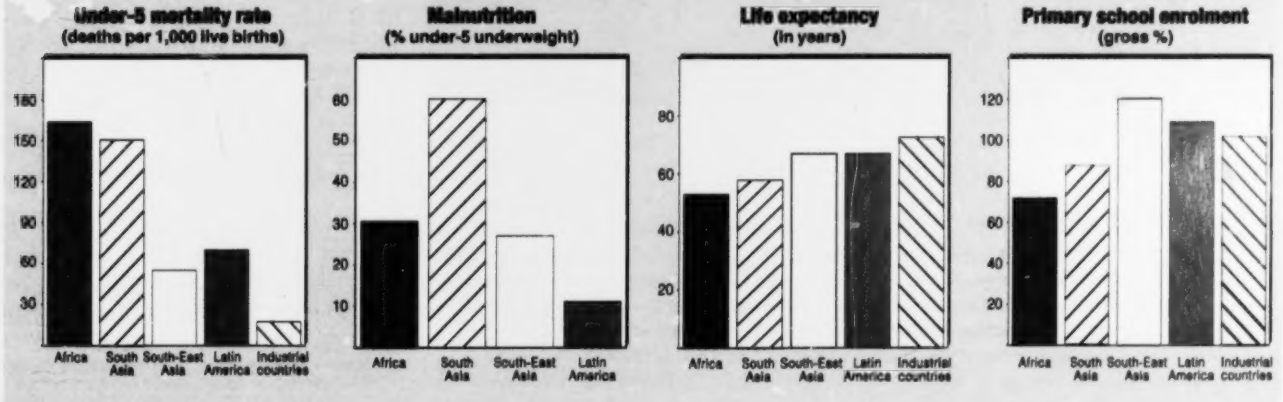
"Are the child mortality trends for these few countries going to be reflected in many others, or are they only a small aberration in the continuing decline of under-five mortality?" questions UNICEF statistician Gareth Jones. "Child mortality data gathered in the 1980s showed a continuation of the decline of the 1970s, and the successful immunization campaigns of the late-80s should have accelerated this decline. At the time it appeared as if the concentrated efforts of African governments to protect the welfare of children were succeeding, despite the intense economic crisis. But the latest under-five mortality data questions this interpretation," he says.

Balance sheet for Africa's children

Positives	Negatives
Under-five mortality rate fallen by half since 1960	African children still die at 10 times industrial country rate
Two-thirds of African countries have immunized 75% of children against six major childhood diseases	750,000 children are HIV-positive and up to 10 million could become orphans because of AIDS
Oral rehydration use is over 60% in a number of countries	29 million children are underweight
More than 80% of urban children have safe drinking water	Only 40% of rural children have access to safe water
Increase in malnutrition rate less than expected	Malnutrition affects 30% of children
Primary school enrolment up during 1970s, from 65 to 90% for boys, 44 to 69% for girls	Primary school enrolment rate fell by 7% for both boys and girls in 1990

African children in the world

Source: Africa Recovery from UNICEF, *Africa's Children, Africa's Future*, 1992



Benin struggles for market-led recovery

After a successful transition to political pluralism, Benin continues its pursuit of economic recovery with a tough adjustment programme that has aggravated already difficult social conditions. Government finances have improved and overall growth has been restored, but domestic and external constraints are combining to maintain some fragility in the country's political and economic gains.

By Robert Dossou in Cotonou

Benin's passage from a single-party, "Marxist-Leninist" state to a multi-party democracy increasingly reliant on market forces has been turbulent. After an economy-wide decline in the 1980s marked by growing budget and trade deficits, the country is now into the second year of a second structural adjustment programme. There have been clear gains, including over 3 per cent average growth in 1990-91, a strong recovery in government revenue largely due to an upturn in the import-re-export trade with the giant Nigerian market next door, and successful tax reform.

Diversifying out of cotton, a mainstay for Benin's exports and for rural incomes, is a major priority for the government.

But progress has been much slower in other areas, not only due to the newness of political institutions, but also the social sensitivity of some adjustment measures which have been met with strikes and demonstrations. Key among these is the effort to control public spending by cutting the number of public employees, restructuring ministries and privatizing state enterprises. The pace in these areas has been understandably slow with the fresh memories of the civil servant and student protests over months of unpaid wages and stipends that spurred political change in the late 1980s. As Finance Minister Paul Dossou put it, "pressures for political reform and disturbances during 1989 and early 1990 prevented an orderly implementation of the new strategy."

These pressures culminated in the 1990 Conférence des forces vives de la nation, a national event which foreshadowed the popular movements and conferences which resulted in governments falling in other francophone African countries. Benin's national conference set the stage for a full political transition by assuming sovereignty, severely curtailing President Mathieu Kérékou's powers, and appointing former World Bank official Mr. Nicéphore Soglo as Prime Minister. Little was achieved on the administrative front in the ensuing year of multi-party political activity during which Mr. Soglo had to spend long months abroad recuperating from sudden illness, before being returned as the new President at the head of a coalition of opposition parties after presidential and parliamentary elections in February and March 1991.

Since then, social conditions have remained difficult and strikes continue to punctuate the political and economic scene. At a time when combined urban unemployment and underemployment stand at some 31 per cent, and rural exodus remains high, job-creation is among the priorities of special programmes, now underway, to address the "Social Dimensions of Development," (see box, page 20). However, the jobs crisis is expected to worsen as the steady flow of new entrants to the job market meets a virtual freeze on public sector recruitment and a weak private sector.

The government recently reaffirmed its commitment to more stringent financial stabilization and structural reform during late September talks in Washington with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Its priorities include economic diversification and faster private sector development aided by new fiscal, statutory and financial incentives to stimulate job-creation. However, government efforts are circumscribed by strict ceilings on budget spending and credit growth imposed by the demand-management strategy of the adjustment programme.

Opportunities for diversification are also hampered by Benin's narrow economic base — cotton is the major commodity export — and fragile soils that limit both the productivity and potential of the agricultural sector. Benin's external

Robert Dossou, a former Minister of Planning, is a Member of the National Assembly and chairs its Commission on Law Administration and Human Rights

debt remains onerous despite substantial rescheduling in favour of this least developed country which ranks 149th out of 160 countries in the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) latest ranking of human development indicators.

Until the private sector picks up, an overwhelmingly large informal sector will continue acting as an imperfect safety valve for the cities. Already by 1986, says the International Labour Office, some 67 per cent of urban economic activity was informal, occupying 140,000 people in artisanal businesses and many others in the vigorous parallel market in goods and currency that largely escapes the tax net, restricts savings mobilization and further recovery of revenue collection.

The government and donors lay increasing emphasis on improving Benin's capacities in policy design, implementation and management, as well as aid coordination. But faced with the need to make faster progress on tough reforms, Benin's young democracy is set for severe tests as the government grapples with domestic and external constraints in its pursuit of sustained economic recovery.

From home-grown to full-blown SAP

The roots of Benin's economic crisis have usually been traced to a combination of domestic and external factors. The government of President Mathieu Kérékou had embarked on a wave of nationalizations during the 1974-75 boom in commodity prices that put 118 enterprises into state hands. Although the economy grew an average 5 per cent a year in 1977-80, the the state-dominated productive sectors were characterized by a "high level of inefficiency and mismanagement," according to one UN agency. By the early 1980s, state enterprises had become undercapitalized, unproductive liabilities swallowing huge public subsidies and carrying heavy debts that worsened the position of increasingly fragile state-owned banks.

As the external environment deteriorated at the end of the 1970s, Benin's terms of trade worsened, particularly from 1983 onwards with the onset of steeply falling commodity prices. Another important factor was the strong economic downturn in neighbouring Nigeria where border closures against smuggling, and naira depreciation further slowed the lucrative transit trade.

The Kérékou government found itself facing deepening budget deficits, stagnant growth and an accumulation of arrears on internal and external payments as revenue failed to keep pace with expenditure incurred on growing numbers of public employees (from some 26,000 in 1980 to 43,000 by 1988) and on rising allocations to the military. An upsurge in fraud and smuggling, combined with civil service strikes over worsening conditions of service, also hit revenue collection rates.

Cutting back the state sector

Increasingly harassed on both the economic and political fronts, the government adopted an "informal stabilization programme" in 1986-88 that aimed to reduce both public spending and external borrowing. A prominent target was a state sector which had already been cut back to 57 firms in 1982.

Benin at a glance: 1990

Population	4.7 million
Population growth rate	3.2%
GNP per capita	$362
Currency	CFA franc 272=US$1
Gross domestic product	CFA517bn ($1.9bn)
of which: agriculture	43%
manufacturing	4.6%
Total external debt	$1,427 mn
Debt service ratio	6.7%
Life expectancy	50 years
Infant mortality rate	113 per 1,000 births
Adult literacy rate	23%

Source: World Bank, IMF, UNICEF, UNFPA

Adjustment in a volatile democracy

Benin's greatest economic priority is stabilization, declared Finance Minister Paul Dossou in a late September interview with *Africa Recovery* in Washington. But stabilization would not be enough: "there must also be recovery." To achieve this, he said, Benin had to make internal adjustments in spite of a "very difficult situation in the social sector because of having to restructure state enterprises, and privatize others." Hopefully, Benin's reform efforts will be supported with an enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) from the IMF, for which negotiations are currently underway. Mr. Dossou expressed optimism that these would be concluded successfully, providing some of the increased resources needed for the difficult adjustment process.

Implementation of adjustment policies was all the more difficult in the new climate of open criticism, private newspapers and multipartism, Mr. Dossou acknowledged. After 17 years of "a Marxist-Leninist regime...with a single party, official trade unions, official press, and so on," everybody was still learning the ways of democracy and adjusting to its imperfections. He cited the National Assembly, where "core issues are not always grasped, dossiers are left to pile up, and some people insist on making sometimes facile criticisms when there are substantive issues to deal with." While not criticizing the "hard-working parliamentarians," he said the government was exploring how to improve working conditions for Assembly members so that they could expedite work.

The government, he claimed, currently had a backlog of some 60 items before the Assembly, which hampered its ability to take action, or to mobilize funds "because we have not got ratification yet." He said the government was also looking for resources to train journalists and trade unionists "in order that their critiques are not merely facile, and for them to have a better idea of what should and should not be said or written."

Returning to the theme of national reconstruction after a "very disastrous situation," Mr. Dossou stressed the need for agricultural diversification away from reliance on cotton and palm oil, and towards food crops such as maize and rice, as well as cassava which had "market potential in Europe as animal feed." Infrastructure was also a priority, and excellent roads were needed for the important transit trade with neighbouring countries. Rural roads would also be improved "not only to get inputs to farmers but also to enable them to market their produce." The finance minister said industrial policy had to move from the previous emphasis on large-scale enterprises, such as the cement and sugar factories. With industry contributing only 10 per cent to GDP, Mr. Dossou said "we are aiming to revive the private sector through small and medium-size enterprises."

Much would depend on improving access to credit for small and artisanal enterprises. "They don't ask for big money, but they still need assistance without having to go through the complicated procedures of traditional banks," said Mr. Dossou. He said the new structures for rural credit were also part of efforts to reconstitute a viable financial sector.

Nii K.Bentsi-Enchill

A restructuring programme, drawn up with World Bank assistance, set out to improve management in the sector and reduce government participation, while stimulating private enterprise. Some private operators took over government monopolies, and others were helped to take bigger equity stakes in joint ventures. Some firms were privatized, others were restructured, and liquidations took care of some 30 public and semi-public enterprises.

Such measures, however, proved unable to stem the tide of crisis which saw most state and private sector enterprises in disarray, a virtually bankrupt financial sector, and public services such as health and sanitation in a state of collapse.

Another important factor was the fact that the programme was implemented against a background of rising social tension as the restive population became increasingly unwilling to consent to any sacrifices without fundamental political change. Government finances were so bad that by 1988, civil servants were owed six months' salary at a time when per capita income was falling at around 3 per cent annually, according to UNDP.

Paralysed by strikes and demonstrations, and with its back against the wall, the government concluded negotiations with the IMF and World Bank for full-blown stabilization and adjustment programmes in mid-1989. These agreements eased relations with bilateral creditors, resulting in rescheduling of Benin's bilateral debt service by the Paris Club, and a jump in net foreign aid from $71 mn in 1988 to $265 mn in 1989, or from some $36 to $54 in per capita terms.

Aims of the first SAP

In a period of rapid political change, the government undertook a sweeping programme of reform using demand management as a primary instrument in pursuit of 3 per cent real annual growth, equal to population growth. Aided by the IMF and soft-loans from the World Bank, programme objectives included meeting domestic and external payments, controlling inflation, and carrying out structural reforms in all economic sectors, as well as providing incentives to "growth areas" such as agriculture and services.

It aimed for better resource management through improved investment and lower spending in both public and parastatal sectors, and for faster private sector growth aided by special incentive schemes and a revived banking sector.

With net foreign direct investment only half the $4 mn level of 1980, the government also took steps to improve conditions for foreign capital and private business, publishing a new Investment Code in May 1990, and introducing new business legislation to simplify trading rules and procedures. It also revised labour laws to facilitate recruitment and retrenchment.

A crucial area of reform was a moribund financial sector. By 1987, bad loans represented three-quarters of outstanding credit, with state firms responsible for two-thirds of these non-performing assets. Benin's banks also had debts with the Banque centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO) running to CFA 64 bn francs by mid-1988 which blocked access to refinancing, and left them unable to perform routine operations.

Two state-owned banks — Caisse nationale de crédit agricole (CNCA) and the Banque béninoise de développement (BBD) — were liquidated by 1990, and the Banque commerciale du Bénin (BCB) put under provisional management with its operations suspended. The government assumed the sizeable debts owed to banks by liquidated state enterprises, and began a selective reimbursement of frozen deposits, which also aimed to achieve some degree of loan recovery. Most private sector depositors, for example, were able to recover only CFA 250,000, whatever the size of their original deposit. The Fonds de compensation et de réhabilitation, a special fund set up in 1989, began reimbursing mostly public sector depositors to the tune of CFA 4 bn in 1990, and CFA 5 bn in 1991, with another CFA 5 bn projected for this year.

There has been a "gradual restoration of public confidence"

Pressing needs in the social sector

Coming relatively late to full-blown structural adjustment in 1989, Benin has already begun work on a Social Dimensions of Development programme (SDD) aimed at protecting vulnerable groups and reducing poverty.

According to Planning and Economic Restructuring Minister Robert Tagnon, already poor social conditions have been "aggravated" by stabilization and adjustment measures. Prominent among these are the public spending cuts that have entailed job losses and a recruitment freeze in the civil service, as well as further constraints in the health and education sectors. All the more critical, says Mr. Tagnon, is the fact that progress at the macro-economic level has yet to provide anything tangible for Benin's people.

This is particularly true in Cotonou, the capital city and other major towns, where over 30 per cent of active people are either unemployed or underemployed and job prospects are bleak with planned cuts of 2,000 civil service jobs a year through 1994 and few openings in the private sector. While national population growth is over 3 per cent, the urbanization rate is even higher. Already, some 45 per cent of the population is younger than 15, and in the very difficult social conditions, the government has acknowledged a growing incidence of abandoned, malnourished children, juvenile delinquency, and teenage pregnancies.

The initital phases of the SDD programme are costed at CFA 7.7 bn francs, and six sectoral consultations are being held between October 1992 and May 1993 with donors and lead agencies to detail plans and secure funding in such areas as rural development, infrastructure, private sector promotion and health. Already, substantial progress is reported in child immunization and primary health care, with UNICEF noting that communities are increasingly organizing themselves to manage and maintain local resources and keep social projects running.

The SDD has a CFA 4.3 bn priority programme, mainly financed by the World Bank, which aims to reduce the rate of rural exodus, as well as improve urban conditions. In 1990, some 40 per cent of Benin's population were rural-dwellers living below the poverty

in the financial sector, says Mr. Dossou, citing the four new banks — Ecobank Benin, the Bank of Africa Benin, the Banque internationale du Bénin and Financial Bank du Bénin — which had mobilized CFA 57 bn in deposits by August 1991, after little more than a year of activity. But Mr. Dossou urged the banks to increase their lending activities in order to more actively support economic growth. He said the presence of a big international bank would complete the return of credibility to Benin's financial sector. Lengthy negotiations with Crédit Lyonnais — whose local branch was nationalized in 1974 — were reportedly completed in April 1992, setting the stage for its return.

The government tackled the public sector on the strength of audits carried out after 1989 which revealed a persistence of low productivity and low motivation, loose controls, heavy indebtedness, and aged equipment, all of which had contributed to the fall in industry's share of gross domestic product (GDP) from 15 per cent in 1980 to under 11 per cent in 1990.

Despite the evident progress in some areas, overall results were worse than expected, and most economic performance targets of the first adjustment programme were not met, according to Mr. Dossou, in part due to the contraction of internal demand and of trade with a Nigerian economy also in the throes of adjustment.

UNICEF/Maggie Murray-Lee

Primary health care is a feature of efforts to rebuild social services.

Even the strategy of cutting the public payroll through voluntary retirements — a programme element the IMF describes as "an important factor for stabilization" — was hampered by the heavy cost of termination estimated at CFA 2 mn per person. The initial aim was 2,500 departures by June 1990, but by end-1990, only 1,590 public servants had retired, including too many of the most senior people. With World Bank and European Community funding for paying the early retirement benefits, the government's target for 1992 is 4,000 departures at more junior levels, and only one new recruit for three retirements.

Looking to speed the pace of reform after its victory in the

threshold, and the priority programme will focus on repairing education and health infrastructure as well as rural roads and village water supply. By using unskilled workers for labour-intensive maintenance, the government hopes to raise incomes and at the same time improve delivery of social services. Other financiers include the UN Capital Development Fund and UNDP, which is also overseeing the agency set up in March this year to manage the SDD programme.

But as Finance Minister Paul Dossou observed in late September, labour-intensive projects alone "are not really the solution. We need to create jobs in private enterprises, and also in agriculture." Government plans in this direction include providing new incentives to stimulate private sector demand for labour, and more vocational training.

Informal education, says Mr. Tagnon, has been "notoriously inadequate" where both vocational training and literacy are concerned, a situation reflected in the 77 per cent rate of adult illiteracy. The deterioration during the 1980s of educational facilities and equipment has also affected primary school enrolment which peaked at 62 per cent in 1982 but fell to 59 per cent by 1989. The situation is similar in the health sector where less than half the population has access to any medical services, and 55 per cent of births are without qualified attendance. Water and sanitation services are also receiving particular attention: little more than half the population has safe water, and according to Mr. Tagnon, two-thirds of Cotonou gets flooded in the rainy season. **N.B-E.**

Benin: economic indicators

	1980	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
GDP at current market prices (CFA bn)	245.6	464.2	499.8	502.7	*469.7*	*482.2*	*487.4*	516.8†
Real GDP growth (%)	20.9	2.0	6.4	-1.7	-3.9	1.2	*-2.0*	*3.8*
Merchandise exports ($mn)	164.0	223.8	314.1	303.2	363.4	379.1	*218.0*	*264.0*
Merchandise imports ($mn)	312.2	290.9	337.7	412.4	483.8	511.0	*317.0*	*428.0*
Current account balance ($mn)	-35.7	-57.1	4.7	-65.5	-73.9	-82.9	*-55*	*-118*
Gross budget deficit/GDP (%)	n.a.	n.a.	-11.5	n.a.	-10.7	-9.4	-9.9	-9.7†
Gross investment/GDP (%)	18.6	7.4	8.9	13.5	12.9	12.9	8.9	12.0
Total external debt ($mn)	417	674	812	942	1,140	1,060	1,177	1,427
Debt service ratio (%)	4.9	16.8	16.2	18.5	9.1	6.8	6.5	6.7
Official development assistance per capita ($)	26	20	24	33	32	36	54	*55*
Cotton production ('000 tonnes)	16	88	86	139	89	106	108	118
Food production per capita (1979-81=100)	98	113	115	117	103	116	123	115
Exchange rate (average CFA per dollar)*	221.3	437.0	449.3	346.3	300.5	297.8	319.0	272.3
Reserves (months of export cover)	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	*0.2*	*1.4*

Sources: World Bank, IMF, FAO, African Development Bank * August 1992 CFA 240=$1 † estimate Figures in italics indicate different source

February 1991 elections, the Soglo government agreed with donors on new targets in public and financial restructuring, fiscal receipts and private sector development, as well as an overall goal of 4 per cent annual growth by 1994.

In June that year, it signed a second agreement with the World Bank for a $55 mn adjustment credit, besides receiving over a 12-month period five other Bank credits totalling $69.6 mn for urban development, electricity sector rehabilitation, natural resource management and restructuring of agricultural services.

The Bank at end-1991 praised Benin for progress on the macro-economic and public finance fronts, with revenue slightly exceeding targets, a balanced recurrent budget, and over 3 per cent growth in GDP. Benin confirmed to donors at an April 1992 UNDP Roundtable meeting in Geneva, that fiscal receipts rose from CFA 44.9 bn in 1989 to CFA 59.7 bn in 1991, some CFA 2 bn higher than original estimates. This was partly due to tax reforms that featured a value-added tax which "more than doubled sales tax revenue," said one IMF official. Government representatives also cited revised customs tariffs, pre-shipment inspections of imports, and improved fiscal and non-fiscal revenue collection.

"Labour-intensive projects alone are not really the solution. We need to create jobs in private enterprises, and also in agriculture."

— Paul Dossou, Minister of Finance

Vigorously rebutting donor concern at corruption in the customs service, the government cited 1991 customs revenue of CFA 25 bn, similar to 1988 levels, with CFA 30 bn expected in 1992. This indicated better collection on the back of a strong upturn in transit trade which saw imports through Cotonou virtually doubling from 760,000 tonnes in 1989 to 1.3 mn tonnes in 1991, with the trend continuing in first-half 1992. Although the 1992 tonnage was little more than the 1988 figure of 1.1 mn, Cotonou port was now on a sounder footing due to lower duties set in 1991 to correspond more with Togo, where political problems had affected trade through Lomé port.

Government confidence in meeting the 1992 revenue target of CFA 69.3 bn was buttressed by total monthly receipts of some CFA 5 bn by March, with a further boost likely from recently liberalized distribution of petroleum products, and a widened tax net. Total revenue as a percentage of GDP was also on track, the government said, rising from 9.2 per cent in 1989 to 11 per cent in 1991, with a 1992 target of 11.4 per cent.

Further impetus to growth has come from the agricultural sector where output rose by 4.5 per cent in 1991 against 1.4 per cent in 1990. Cotton, the predominant commodity export, comfortably exceeded original targets with total output of some 183,000 tonnes in 1991.

Progress in such food crops as cassava and maize has restored food supply to more satisfactory levels, but the government recognizes the need to increase food security and reduce rural poverty in a country where over 70 per cent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. It plans to restructure its agriculture budget to promote increased production of both food and cash crops. This will involve new incentives for more private sector participation in agricultural produce marketing as well as in the provision of credit to farmers. Director of Planning Mr. Jules Ahodekon has also outlined plans for regional and local cooperative agricultural credit associations, providing rural people with access to small and medium-size loans and enabling them to avoid the very high interest rates often charged by moneylenders. Donors have called for faster progress and for better redistribution of profits from cotton sales to promote broader rural growth.

Perspectives on further reform

Despite Benin's radical moves away from a command economy and towards full liberalization, donors at a recent Roundtable meeting in Geneva voiced a number of concerns. Besides the basic need for greater efficiency in government and more "budgetary transparency," especially in defence spending, donors criticized the slow pace of public sector restructuring and privatization. They added that bank credit was still inade-

quate for new ventures in need of working capital.

Finance Minister Dossou pointed out various contributions to budgetary transparency such as the "vigorous steps" taken to control military spending. He also cited audits that had been completed on the finance, national education and rural development ministries. All other ministries would now undergo similar scrutiny to advance the payroll reduction and decentralization programmes, he added.

To stimulate productive investment in the private sector, said Mr. Dossou, the government had eased access to credit, and had largely solved the inherited problem of frozen bank deposits of small and medium businesses by writing off their relatively minor arrears of up to CFA 1 mn. While donors commended plans to improve the access of local construction firms to government contracts in such areas as road works, Mr. Dossou pointed out that the structural predominance of the informal sector limited the amount of savings that banks could mobilize.

UNDP/Ph. Massey

Access to credit is being eased for small-scale enterprises, such as this group of seamstresses in Cotonou.

Job-creation a key issue

The slow pace of privatization remains an acknowledged problem, with some blame laid on the state bureaucracy. Another factor is the political sensitivity of the massive lay-offs (up to half the work force of some firms) required to streamline production costs in possible candidates for privatization. A prime example is Sonicog, a palm oil factory struggling to find export markets against transparent palm oil from Malaysia and the Philippines. This firm is yet to attract a buyer after a recent audit indicated a need for heavy investment in new plant and a 40 per cent cut in the workforce. Despite the export possibilities offered by the giant Nigerian market next door, analysts point out that potential investors in Benin are reluctant to take on companies saddled with obsolete plant.

The government aims to reduce its portfolio to just 15 firms by mid-1993, retaining the major public utilities and other strategic enterprises. Major targets for privatization include the Savé sugar factory and the Onigbolo cement complex, both loss-making joint ventures with Nigeria, along with transport and agro-industrial companies.

In spite of certain signs of progress, Benin is in for some difficult years ahead. Renewed growth, says the IMF, is still "barely enough to maintain stable per capita income." Although it points to the country's agricultural potential, notably in pineapples and maize, this will not be enough to secure faster growth. There is also concern at over-crowding of land in southern Benin and the need to improve infrastructure in northern regions to raise rural incomes.

Job-creation remains a key issue for the government, and will require more efficient resource allocation to advance the process of linking different sectors of Benin's economy. Of notable importance is the steadily growing informal sector, not just because of the sector's role of social safety valve in a period of high unemployment. Some analysts insist that the plethora of artisanal enterprises — estimated at 87,000 back in 1985 — have a role to play in the gradual process of building local industry and manufacturing from small-scale roots.

However, Benin's overall options are limited, and it will need substantial external finance for years to come. Such aid is bound to come with tough conditionalities attached, a fact which is sharply illustrated by the uncompromising warning from an IMF official earlier this year that the government's concern to improve prospects for groups "vulnerable to economic restructuring... will require intensification of adjustment efforts." ■

IMF/World Bank

from page 3

would now be considered a victory.

The Bank's chief economist for Africa Ishrat Husain points out that with every $1 of IDA spent in Africa raising another $4 from donors through the Bank-coordinated Special Programme of Assistance (SPA), any shortfall for IDA-10 will have a harsh knock-on effect for the region.

Serious discussion on the volume of IDA-10 has also been stalled as a result of a stand-off between the US and Japan, the two largest donors. Aid officials say the US has made it clear that it will be difficult to get Congress to authorize a contribution substantially above the present level of just over $1 bn.

Japan, however, has warned that it will not necessarily compensate for the shortfall of other donors, as it did in IDA-9, officials familiar with the negotiations say. To ensure the $18 bn figure in the absence of an increased US contribution, Japan would have to become the premier donor to IDA, which would have implications for the decision-making hierarchy in the Bank.

But even if the $18 bn figure is reached, this will not compensate for at least nine new IDA members, some of them large economies. In Africa alone, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt and Zimbabwe are all new claimants on IDA. Bank officials concede that with growing demand for a limited pie, smaller African countries could suffer. This is probably true even with reflows of previous IDA flows, which are projected to boost IDA-10 resources by some $2.5 bn.

Keeping Africa's share

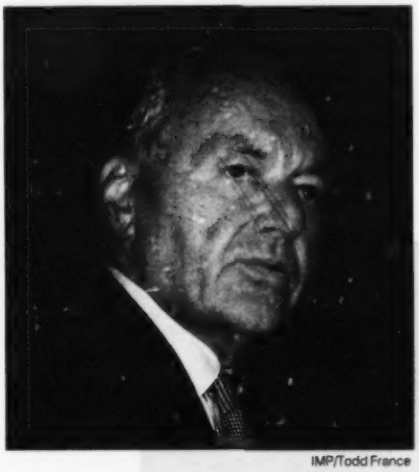
Speaking for the African group, Mr. Malima made a strong plea that sub-Saharan Africa's share of IDA remain at 50 per cent. He says that Bank officials have voiced their intent to preserve the region's IDA share, but ruefully observes that the final outcome will depend on the priorities of "the big players."

Japan's Finance Minister Tsutomu Hata, for one, warned in September that "attention must be paid to the needs of Asia" in IDA-10. Arguments that Asia still contains the largest number of the world's poor, could limit plans for reducing the share of China and India, which between them have traditionally taken 30 per cent of IDA commitments.

Bank and African officials alike stress that any shortfalls on IDA and other aid flows would affect both current adjustment programmes and renewed efforts to reduce poverty. The report to the Development Committee confirms views earlier put by the UN and others that in the poorest countries, "the need for external financing will be larger," as countries simultaneously try to implement market-oriented reforms, reduce poverty and address environmental concerns.

The report stresses that developing countries will have to increase domestic resource mobilization. While committed to doing this, Mr. Malima points out that "there is only so much you can squeeze from a lean person." Increased aid and debt relief is essential, Nigeria's Finance Minister Alhaji Ahmadu Abubakar argues, especially as donors are now demanding expensive political reforms.

At their July economic summit, Western leaders resolved to bridge the dilemma presented by tighter public expenditure by direct-



IMF/Todd France

World Bank President Lewis Preston has warned of the danger of aid cuts

Low net flows

For African countries, retained funds from the World Bank continue to be worryingly low. Despite increased commitments for Africa during its 1992 financial year (FY), net disbursements (after repayments) fell to $1.64 bn from $1.87 bn the previous year. When interest and other charges are taken into account, net transfers — the amount of new, additional Bank funding in FY 1992 — totalled only $783 mn compared with $895 mn the previous year.

Slow Bank procedures in some areas and mounting problems at both the national and project level, as well as repayment costs, account for the low level of net flows. Implementation problems are causing growing concern. Bank President Lewis Preston told African ministers in Washington that of a total of $23 bn committed to Africa, $14 bn remains undisbursed and promised to take measure to improve the quality of implementation.

In its latest financial year, the IMF had positive net flows to Africa after many years of negative transfers. Total disbursements rose to SDR887 mn ($1.25 bn, including Egypt) from SDR577 mn ($800 mn) the previous year. After accounting for repayments, net flows from the IMF to Africa were a positive SDR274 mn in FY92, up from a negative SDR300 mn in FY91.

Much of this improvement reflects increased IMF activity in North Africa and for sub-Saharan Africa net flows were still just negative in FY92. Some 20 African countries were still net providers of funds to the IMF, albeit for some countries, such as Mauritius and Morocco, this reflects improving economies. A number of African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt and Nigeria, were also in a negative position with the World Bank in FY92.

Overall, Africa, unlike other regions of the world, has since 1980 experienced positive net transfers, in real terms, from all sources, according to data presented to the Development Committee. But in 1990 and 1991 there was a worrying fall-off from the 1989 peak of $13.2 bn (see graph, page 3). The OECD's 1991 *Survey of Financing and External Debt of Developing Countries* also shows real net resource flows to sub-Saharan Africa falling in 1991, to $23.8 bn (1990 $) from $24.1 bn in 1990. Although no separate data is available for net aid receipts, the inference is that they were at least only static in 1991 in real terms, after a 3.6 per cent rise in 1990.

In its latest figures, the UN's Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD), shows a slight improvement, in nominal terms, in net transfers to sub-Saharan Africa (excluding Nigeria) in 1990 and 1991, though only rising to their 1989 level. For Africa as a whole, however, net transfers fell to under $1 bn in 1991. If terms of trade losses are taken into account Africa experienced a "net outflow of real resources in the two first years of the decade," the UN points out.

ing more aid towards the poorest countries and for directly attacking poverty. IDA-10 will reflect this, but donor countries are also arguing the diminishing economic significance of aid and the increased attention that should be given to other factors, such as foreign investment and trade, which can yield bigger returns.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on 21 September, US President Bush argued that with the end of the Cold War, "foreign aid, as we've known it, needs to be transformed," moving from "'aid dependency' to economic partnership." If re-elected he would "alter fundamentally" the focus of US assistance, with more emphasis "on building economic partnerships among our private sectors."

IMF/Todd Finance

Nigeria Finance Minister Alhaji Ahmadu Abubakar has called for equal sacrifice and more resources from donors.

But African ministers point to the now near-total dependence of many African states on official flows and the relative weakness of their private sectors, certainly in international terms. In Washington, African ministers also warned multilateral officials that there is a growing sense of imbalance between African and industrial countries on the sacrifices to be made in getting faster and more balanced world growth. "The external effort is not matching the internal efforts," Nigeria's Finance Minister argues. He stresses the need for more foreign investment, more equal access to markets — pointing to the stalled 'Uruguay Round' of trade talks as an example of the failure of industrial countries to make similar sacrifices — and greater debt relief. Mr. Malima makes the same point; 'very little progress" has been made in alleviating Africa's debt burden, he argues.

Their point is taken by the Bank's Ernest Stern who said that the cost of adjustment in the rich countries was "being put on the backs of the developing countries." Without adequate aid, one of the casualties could be the very economic and political programmes that donors argue are needed to enable countries to end their dependence on aid and benefit from economic cooperation, African ministers warn. ■

Africans dispute adjustment gains

African ministers expressed strong doubts about the gains from current adjustment efforts at the end-September meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Donors, however, are insistent that adjustment is working and warned that they will continue to make assistance conditional not only on economic reforms, but on political change as well.

The IMF is ready to give African countries its "strong support," Managing Director Michel Camdessus told ministers, "as soon as they are ready to embark on appropriate reforms and sound programmes."

Donors backed their confidence with renewed claims that adjustment is stimulating faster growth. Growth in 10 adjusting African countries was an average 2.5 per cent faster than other African countries during the late 1980s, new IMF figures suggest and the gap widened in 1990-91. "Doubt and disillusion can set in as pain often precedes gain," World Bank President Lewis Preston conceded, "but history documents the benefits of perseverance," he told the annual meeting.

But Nigeria's Finance Minister Alhaji Ahmadu Abubakar insists that the gain does not always justify the pain; "the growth rate does not relate to the level of sacrifice in undergoing structural adjustment," he says. Lack of a matching response from donors in providing necessary resources were much to blame for the difficulties African countries found in fully adhering to programmes.

According to the latest issue of the IMF's *World Economic Outlook*, 10 African countries undergoing "significant" stabilization or structural adjustment programmes experienced average annual real economic growth of 4.8 per cent between 1987-89 against growth of only 2.3 per cent for 38 non-adjusting or "other" countries. For 1990-91 the respective growth rates were 4.6 and 1.3 per cent and for 1992 are projected at 4.1 and 1.7 per cent.

"Adjustment is inevitable," Tanzania's Finance Minister Kighoma Malima told *Africa Recovery*, but there are different ways of going about it, he argues. As spokesman in meetings of the African caucus with Mr. Camdessus and Mr. Preston, he voiced the widespread concerns over the pace of adjustment, how the burden that it imposes is being shared between donors and recipients and fears over the growing proliferation of conditionalities, he said.

Tying aid to political reforms is a particular area of concern, with African ministers arguing that national sovereignty was now under threat. Japan is the latest donor to issue guidelines on its aid policy specifically addressing the importance of political reforms, as well as the question of military expenditure.

If donors are to insist on democracy they must accept that it must have an impact on adjustment programmes, African ministers argue. "One of the costly prices of democracy can be the inability to take tough decisions," Mr. Abubakar said, pointing to the controversy in Nigeria over reducing petrol subsidies.

Mr. Malima insists that donors must allow countries to find their own way to political pluralism. And the "inevitable delays which result from the introduction of political reforms should not cause the Bretton Woods institutions and the donors to suspend their support for the adjustment efforts of our countries," he told the annual meetings. Both ministers insist that donors should compensate for the extra costs incurred in political reforms, such as elections. In early October, Mozambique asked donors to meet the bulk of the $80 mn cost of holding general elections next year. Some donors are already responding: the United Kingdom is paying for ballot boxes and voting slips for Kenya's elections, expected shortly, while in late October the US Agency for International Development announced a $12 mn grant to foster democratization in Africa.

African ministers are clearly concerned that despite donor denials, the determination of African political systems and economic priorities is being taken out of their hands.

An increasingly important condition on lending is progress on poverty reduction. Nordic countries are presently strengthening the poverty guidelines in IDA-10.

"We don't have a problem with that type of conditionality," Mr Malima says. But African ministers are clearly concerned that despite donor talk that African countries must own their adjustment programmes if they are to be politically credible, the determination of African political systems and economic priorities is being taken out of their hands. ■

NGOs widen anti-adjustment action

By Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill in Washington

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from four continents are to coordinate actions against what they described as the "devastating" economic, social and environmental impact of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). At a mid-September international forum in Washington, NGO representatives from 46 countries (13 of them African) began planning campaigns leading up to the fiftieth anniversary of the IMF and World Bank in 1994. African delegates stressed that local NGOs must collaborate more to help build a strong international chain of grassroots opposition to SAPs.

NGOs argue that overcrowded classrooms and rising drop-out rates are among the adverse consequences of structural adjustment.

African organizations resolved to begin or accelerate planning for national meetings of NGOs, trade unions, women's groups and other civic organizations to decide on actions against and alternatives to SAPs. Participants generally acknowledged that NGOs should complement trade unions in their "front-line" role as the biggest mass organizations confronting SAPs. One African trade unionist noted that with the massive SAP-induced retrenchments, unions now had to reach out into the swelling informal sector. Another delegate said: "NGOs should recognize their own limitations, in that they can lead only a segment of the community. We must associate with all progressive forces in the society."

Organizers of the forum on "World Bank and IMF structural adjustment lending" held just before the annual meetings of the two institutions, included the US-based Development GAP, the Malaysia-based Third World Network, and the European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD).

Participants said that SAPs had hurt wages, income distribution, small farmers, food security, the environment and human rights, and also put a disproportionate burden on women. Although one delegate said the challenge for NGOs was like David facing Goliath, the forum agreed on the urgent task of breaking the Bank and Fund's "stranglehold on information," in order to help people around the world develop alternative policies based on local priorities rather than the "global agenda of the elite."

With the emphasis on coordinated actions, African participants agreed to support existing regional NGO networks, and pressure them to make SAPs a priority focus of research and mobilizing action. Among such networks is the Dakar-based Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations (FAVDO) which was not present at this Washington forum. African NGO delegates nevertheless welcomed the decision of FAVDO's January 1992 general assembly in Harare to make adjustment a priority issue.

'Extended Suffering for African People'

African NGOs said they were all facing similar economic programmes with virtually identical effects on ordinary urban and rural people. Zimbabwe's economic programme had been renamed "Extended Suffering for African People" by slum-dwellers in Harare, one NGO reported. Another participant said SAP policies were "killing" many NGO development projects as well as small businesses. Several projects were said to be losing momentum, not only those that focused directly on income-generation, but also vocational and other educational projects. This was largely due to high input costs (fertilizer, pesticides, equipment), and the sharply rising living costs which NGOs blamed on currency devaluations.

Deep impact of devaluation

Among the repercussions of devaluation were soaring food and transport costs. The price of a bag of maize in Zimbabwe was said to have jumped nearly 300 per cent after a 45 per cent currency devaluation in late 1991, while transport costs made grain even more expensive in some rural areas. The price of cattle dip in Tanzania had risen sixfold in just a few years, while a cloth in Guinea-Bissau that used to be worth a quarter sack of rice was now worth two sacks.

Ordinary people were also being hit by rising fees for already inadequate health and education services that were being privatized under SAP. Some participants said the number of clinics and health posts in their countries was falling, while drugs were getting scarcer and more expensive. Parents were increasingly withdrawing children from schools because of rising fees. And in Ghana, said a conference paper, SAP had brought higher malnutrition, school drop-out rates and adult illiteracy.

Turning to the rural impact of adjustment, one delegate said: "New landowners are coming in from the city while peasants are being dispossessed and turned into agricultural labourers, or are forced to emigrate." Land holdings and agricultural export earnings were now concentrated in fewer hands, particularly in the cocoa sector, added the paper on Ghana, while income inequality had risen faster in the 1980s than in the previous decade. Another said that privatization and trade liberalization had promoted corruption, while social services, and even rural projects were being cut back.

In urban areas, public spending cuts had brought forced retrenchment disguised as "voluntary retirement" programmes, declared one delegate. Retraining for some former

public employees in Guinea-Bissau amounted to breaking up sidewalks and then rebuilding them, one participant said, while another exercise in redeployment was to grant 20 hectares of land to urban people with no experience and little inclination for farming. Jobless graduates were now common in Africa, participants noted, even agricultural scientists and doctors in countries that sorely needed their skills. Massive retrenchment in Zimbabwe, added one delegate, was being compounded by the drought which had made farms fail and factories close due to a shortage of hydro-electricity: "The jobless are now going to join the queues for drought relief."

With these elements of crisis widespread in both urban and rural areas, participants turned to the Bank programmes in several countries that aimed to alleviate the social costs of SAP. One delegate argued that the World Bank "sets fire" to a country with its adjustment policies and then tries to put out the fire with the social dimensions programmes. However, such programmes were ineffective for the simple reason that "SAP is a process of impoverishment."

NGOs on the front line

Another delegate observed that NGOs were being called on to help implement these social programmes. "But who decides what kind of programmes these will be? In Zimbabwe, we have called our programme 'home-grown,' but who grew it?" Participants agreed that they had no role in decision-making either on the adjustment process itself or on these social programmes. One argued that government promises of aid for very poor people were pure politics: "This is a method to forestall and weaken opposition, not a sign of intent to provide real assistance."

One participant said that SAPs were simultaneously touted as the cause and the remedy for poverty. Another warned against expecting future higher investment to outweigh the short-term pains of adjustment. One delegate said privatization was enabling transnational corporations to regain control in vital sectors of local economies, and in Ghana's case, growth was "aid-driven," debt-laden, and primarily in extractive sectors such as mining and timber.

A Senegalese delegate said that while "society was disintegrating," the World Bank was strengthening its local alliances. This left NGOs facing an array of forces that included government officials "with an eye on future employment in the Bank or Fund." NGOs had to develop the best form of organization to struggle against SAPs, and the mere existence of hundreds of "popular organizations" was not enough if actual NGO work was marked by timidity. The African NGOs agreed they had to gain access to national economic data, and to learn from each others' experience. Pooling resources would help them overcome their individual "poverty" and subordination to the agendas of foreign NGOs, and also avoid an over-dependence on foreign financing that reflected Africa's general plight. ■

African NGOs focus on mobilization

Drought and the structural adjustment programme (SAP) have joined in worsening conditions for ordinary people in urban and rural areas, says the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) which works in Zimbabwe's drought-stricken Matabele region. It reports that drought has given a new push to rural exodus, but that people are leaving in search of food and not jobs in these times of massive retrenchment. Sharply rising costs of inputs have also made it harder to sustain vocational training and self-help projects intended to raise rural incomes and slow the rate of rural exodus.

Another factor constraining some African NGOs is their uncertain legal and political status. Governments are more comfortable when NGOs stick to 'directly productive' activities, and do not stray into 'politics'. For example, Senegalese women were prominent in demonstrations against the planned privatization of water services which raised concerns that falling water quality would endanger health. The Association pour la promotion de la femme sénégalaise, a Kaolack-based NGO, says that the World Bank, fearing popular mobilization, wants to have suppressed some active village water committees run by women.

Several NGOs say that people are having to work much harder to cope with present hardships, leaving little margin for longer-term considerations. While ORAP is active in relief operations, it is also promoting self-help activities which form part of the recovery process. Food and water being immediate priorities, ORAP has helped people organize themselves to dig wells and boreholes to cater for all water needs including for vegetable gardens. The NGO has persuaded people to feed only the cattle they need for the next year, instead of spreading feed so thinly that all their livestock perishes. It also has a loan system for farm equipment, supplying people who have spent their relief grants on food.

More research is needed on diseases affecting millet and sorghum, crops traditionally grown in drought-prone areas which have had little or no official attention, says ORAP. Although local tastes have turned towards maize and other cash crops that sell better and require less labour, millet and sorghum could help achieve long-term food security.

An important part of African NGO work is training 'development motivators.' While ORAP has a training programme in Bulawayo for village activists, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania has also been building up a network of grassroots leaders for local development work. The Church's development department began monitoring poverty even before Tanzania adopted SAP in 1986, and has since continued, increasingly focusing on the impact of the debt crisis, and promoting community-based rural development.

Locally-designed projects

Its strategy is to encourage participatory research and analysis, using community-generated data, then using this data to help improve the community's analysis of its own problems before drawing up projects and programmes that directly answer local needs. These have included setting up a revolving loan fund using local cattle, and biogas projects that rely on local livestock. Twin aims of such efforts are to increase the economic skills of the youth and reduce the work burden on women who fetch firewood.

A similar concern inspired the Association vive le paysan (AVLP) to ensure that more and more women around Saponé in south-eastern Burkina Faso have small push-carts. In the Sahelian conditions, AVLP has helped people build stone bunds to protect 1,500 hectares of land against erosion. It has also helped set up 29 small grinding mills, and runs literacy classes in 20 locally-built classrooms. AVLP programmes are 60 per cent externally funded, but it says it has enough independence because its small enterprises, such as a blacksmith's forge, generate enough income to ensure control of its recurrent budget. ■

AIDS threatens economic disruption

By Martin Foreman

The AIDS epidemic, already bringing death and misery to millions in Africa, could have a devastating development impact on faltering economies, aid officials and researchers warn. With inadequate incomes and national resources already key factors in its rapid spread in Africa, the epidemic now has the potential to further slow already low levels of economic growth through undermining the household incomes of some of Africa's most marginalized groups and of the professional classes as increasing numbers of the continent's most dynamic and educated people become affected. The selective impact on young and middle-aged adults, many of them members of the economic and political elite, "could lead to economic disruption and political turmoil," the World Health Organization (WHO) warns.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), backed by international agencies such as WHO and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), is launching a continent-wide AIDS education and prevention campaign.

By early 1992 some 7 million Africans had the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) from which AIDS develops, WHO estimates, with some 1 million actual AIDS cases. By 2000 this could rise to 14 million and 5 million respectively, the agency believes.

Demographically, two groups have been especially affected: relatively better-off men and poor women. And through the latter, increasing numbers of children are acquiring the virus.

Geographically, the worst affected are some nine countries in Central and Eastern Africa where between 1 in 10 and 1 in 3 of urban adults are HIV-positive. It is these which are likely to suffer the earliest and most devastating economic impact, although a growing number of other African countries are at risk. Nigeria has very low rates of infection, but nearby Côte d'Ivoire has seen relatively rapid increases in the last five years. The most obvious cost of AIDS is in the loss of young productive lives. According to one estimate, life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa could fall to 48 years by the end of the century, in place of the 62 years expected in the absence of HIV/AIDS. But in a worst-case situation, World Bank research suggests life expectancy could fall to 38 years in the worst-affected regions. A 20-year-old man, who today has an 87 per cent chance of reaching 40, has only a 50-50 chance when HIV-infection rates reach the 5 per cent already seen in some countries.

Projected infant and child deaths from AIDS may increase child mortality rates by as much as 50 per cent during the 1990s. "In many countries this would wipe out the gains in child survival achieved over the past two decades," WHO warns. In addition, there could be as many 10 million orphans as a result of maternal AIDS.

Assessing the demographic and economic impact of AIDS depends on how rapidly the epidemic is seen as spreading. There is general consensus that over the next two to three decades population growth rates in the region will fall from the current average of 3 per cent, perhaps to as low as 1 per cent in some of the most-affected countries. The latter, however, assumes, not only unchanged sexual practices, but also that rural areas will manifest the 35-40 per cent plus rates of infection now being experienced in urban areas in Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. To date, infection rates in rural areas are generally below 5 per cent and rising only slowly or not at all. Rural areas in Tanzania and Uganda, near urban centres or along trading routes, however, have much higher rates and demonstrate the destructive potential of the epidemic if unchecked.

The impact of AIDS on birth and fertility rates remains unclear. Evidence from Uganda suggests that economic, socio-cultural and psychological pressures on HIV-infected women can lead to increased fertility rates, with non-affected families also influenced by higher death rates in the community.

What this all means for dependency rates in a continent already suffering the highest proportion of young and elderly to adults remains unclear. In general terms, Africa's rate of 1,000 dependents for every 1,000 adults will not change, research models sug-

WHO/J.P.Hubley

AIDS education in Uganda: such campaigns are vital in slowing the spread of the disease.

Martin Foreman is co-author of the forthcoming "The Hidden Costs of AIDS" which examines the socio-economic implications of HIV/AIDS for developing countries, and which will be published by the London-based Panos Institute.

gest. But within that there may be significant changes. Individuals are more likely to contract HIV in their teens and twenties and fall sick and die in their thirties and forties. One British model suggests that the population in the 15-25 age group will rise — to as much as one in three of the population — if the virus spreads unchecked.

Thus the burden of dependency will fall increasingly on younger, inexperienced and often lower-earning adults. With the evidence mounting that AIDS is also creating millions of orphans, there is also mounting pressure on elderly, less productive grandparents. With households experiencing falling incomes and loss of labour, children are increasingly being removed from schools, hitting their own and national future income earning potential.

The direct financial impact of AIDS can be high. A Rwandan study estimates that the actual cost of treating in-patients in 1990, was $661,000 — 4.6 per cent of the total health budget — but the estimated cost of treating all cases would have equalled 65 per cent of the budget. Similar estimates for Tanzania put the current cost of treating all AIDS cases at between over 40 and over 50 per cent of the total health budget. However, roughly half of AIDS cases in Africa also suffer from tuberculosis. With other HIV-related conditions, such as diarrhoea, treatment costs can be at least three times more than for AIDS alone.

In 1992, it will cost $400 mn to treat just one in five of HIV or AIDS victims at a hospital, WHO estimates. By 2000, treatment costs for one in five affected Africans would reach $4.5 bn. With African budgets already highly stretched, these costs can be at the expense of victims of other diseases and illnesses. Zairean doctors note that Kinshasa hospitals have been full — the fact that 25 per cent or more of patients are being treated for symptoms arising from HIV/AIDS means that other patients are being displaced.

When the lost economic output of HIV/AIDS victims is added to the direct medical costs the development impact becomes clear. According to one 1988 study total annual costs, per person ranged from 15-54 times per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in Zaire and 24-52 times per capita GDP in Tanzania.

The impact on economic growth rates is very difficult to calculate, although recent studies have provided some disturbing indications. At least 25 per cent of Africa's workforce could be infected by 2010, estimates one study, presented at an AIDS conference in Dakar last December. Other studies suggest that up to 30 per cent of workers in Zambia's copper industry, which accounts for over 90 per cent of exports, could be affected.

Estimates based on assumptions that the typical AIDS victim has secondary education and is in formal urban employment would

WHO/H Arenden

Blood bank in Kenya. Combating AIDS will take up more and more of Africa's limited health budgets.

AIDS in Africa

- By early 1992, some 7 million African men, women and children had the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) out of a world total of 10-12 million; over 1 million Africans had developed AIDS.
- By the year 2000, up to 14 million adult Africans could have HIV, with over 5 million suffering from AIDS. Some 4 million children could be born with HIV and another 10 million could become orphans.
- Nearly 90 per cent of Africa's HIV cases result from unprotected heterosexual activity (the worldwide figure is 75 per cent), with the highest rates among women aged 20-29 and men aged 25-34. In some Eastern, Central and Southern African cities, between a quarter and a third of adults aged 15-49 have HIV.
- HIV rates among one of the high-risk groups, urban prostitutes, range from under 30 per cent in 10 countries (the lowest are 1 and 4 per cent in Botswana and Gabon), to 59 per cent in Kenya, 60 per cent in Guinea-Bissau, with Uganda and Rwanda the highest at 76 and 80 per cent.
- In sub-Saharan countries with high incidence of HIV, life expectancy could fall below 50 years because of AIDS, instead of rising towards 60 years in 2010.
- By 1995, AIDS will cause more child deaths in sub-Saharan Africa than measles or malaria (which alone killed some 800,000 children in 1992). Without AIDS, vaccination and other child-health measures could cut infant mortality by 35-40 per cent.
- In 1992, it would cost $400 mn to treat one in five Africans with HIV or AIDS at a hospital. By the year 2000, treatment costs for one in five affected Africans could reach $4.5 bn.
- A study in Tanzania showed that if all AIDS patients were treated in adequately stocked health centres, the $30 mn cost in 1991 would have been more than half the country's annual health budget.
- Roughly half of Africans with HIV also have tuberculosis, which costs $15-30 per person to treat. In some countries, total annual public spending on medicines averages only $5.40 per person.

mean a permanent annual reduction in gross national product (GNP) of between 0.8-2 per cent in Tanzania and Zaire.

Studies emphasize the impact on national economies of a heavy death and incapacity rate among the most dynamic and educated sectors of the population. In concentrating on the impact in the modern, urban sectors, which accounts for the majority of present AIDS cases, the costs in the rural and informal sectors could be underestimated. With rural-urban migration heavy in all affected countries, many households in rural areas have already felt the impact of AIDS. With many households in or on the margin of poverty, the loss of labour or income from one adult can have a devastating impact on both immediate living standards and on future income if this loss results in a reduced ability to purchase seeds or fertilizer or plant crops, for example. The death of a second adult, particularly a woman head of the household, is likely to trigger disintegration of the family.

Human suffering

Such human suffering — particularly for the possibly homeless children — is transformed on a national scale into lower rates of food production and other falling output from the rural and informal sectors. There is strong evidence that the AIDS epidemic is already having such a severe impact in rural parts of Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda.

The pace and nature of the spread of AIDS in Africa will, of course, determine its overall economic impact. Poverty already explains much of the speed and pattern of the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Nearly 90 per cent of Africa's HIV cases result from unprotected heterosexual activity. Untreated sexually transmitted diseases greatly facilitate the spread of HIV. In the 1970s, the incidence of gonorrhoea and syphilis in parts of the continent was 10-70 times that of Europe and North America. Since then, treatment programmes — seldom a government priority at the best of times — have frequently been cut back along with other health measures as part of the economy drives associated with structural adjustment programmes.

Poverty and migration patterns deepen this lethal potential. In many cities men heavily outnumber women. Where relatively few women are sexually active, they have a much greater risk of infection; in turn they are more likely to infect their sexual partners. A more balanced male:female ratio with consequent chance of fewer sexual partners, can mean a slower spread of infection. In Kigali, where men outnumber women by some 50 per cent in the crucial 20-39 age group, the adult infection rate has risen to 30 per cent (and some 80 per cent among prostitutes), while in more balanced Kinshasa, the rate is 10 per cent.

For many poor women, offering sex in return for money, housing or protection is their only means of survival. For women in general, their economic dependence on men increases their vulnerability to the virus. Many monogamous wives become infected as a result of their husband's extra-marital affairs.

Combating the spread of HIV/AIDS concentrates initially on education and the means of prevention among the young and high-risk groups, such as prostitutes. Despite a now rapidly mounting campaign in many countries, community workers across the continent report success and failure in equal measure.

Beyond the constraints that costs impose on cash-strapped governments, lies the more intractable problems of changing sexual and social behaviour amid widespread poverty.

The AIDS epidemic reflects deep-rooted behaviour patterns, impoverishment and powerlessness. Its costs reflect the costs of underemployment, ill-health and inequality in general. HIV/AIDS is unlikely to be contained as long as it is seen as only a health issue. Its containment depends on addressing the economic roots that fuel its spread. Already, AIDS threatens to become endemic among Africa's most marginalized. But its final economic costs threaten to be much wider. ■

African Agenda against AIDS

African leaders have adopted an Agenda for Action against AIDS, a disease they described as "an exceptional challenge that calls for an exceptional response" from leaders the world over. Stressing that only preventive action could contain the disease, African leaders promised, at the end-June OAU summit, to inject the important missing factor of "political will at the highest level" which would "galvanize international aid and attention, and eliminate obstacles to prevention campaigns." According to their six-point Agenda:

By end-1992, African heads of state will personally and publicly lead AIDS-prevention campaigns in their countries, using all traditional, religious and modern methods of communication. By personal example, they will also show that people with HIV or AIDS must be treated with traditional respect and compassion.

By mid-1993, all adults must know how HIV is transmitted, and how they can protect themselves and others. African leaders will take "decisive steps" to provide more educational and economic opportunities for women to improve their social condition and gain control of their sexual lives. All youth and young adults will also get frank information, condoms, family planning advice, and subsidized treatment of other sexually-transmitted diseases.

By mid-1993, African leaders will adopt "rational plans" for AIDS care, financed from domestic and external resources, which will provide not only drugs essential for HIV-related illnesses, but also community-based support for the families and orphans of AIDS victims.

By end-1993, National Action Plans will be in place for AIDS research within and between African countries. The OAU summit stressed that active African participation in international AIDS research will ensure that new developments will be both accessible and adapted to African needs.

By end-1993, funded plans in all public and private sectors will address the socio-economic consequences of AIDS and set up high-level coordination mechanisms across sectors. Leaders are to ensure that national activities will mobilize community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), building on their established contribution to AIDS-prevention and treatment.

By end-1994, African leaders will jointly draw up a costed, Africa-wide plan for containing AIDS which will be used to attract resources from the international private sector and private foundations, NGOs, aid agencies, and international organizations.

OAU leaders recognized that only limited progress had been made to date in fighting AIDS. Financial resources remain inadequate in both quantity and distribution, although health spending had risen by an average 6 per cent through the medium-term plans drawn up by most African countries for AIDS-prevention and control. Prevention campaigns were still impeded by the same "ignorance, complacency and stigmatization" that had fuelled the rapid spread of AIDS, the Agenda for Action warned.

The Bosnia syndrome

By Djibril Diallo

The following story was told by Jane Perlez of the *New York Times* and took place in Baidoa, Somalia, where the situation is so terrible as to defy description or comprehension. Fourteen year-old Mohammed had been so weakened by hunger that he was given up for dead; his body was already lined up with corpses for burial. Luckily for Mohammed, a nurse discovered that the flicker of life had not left him completely. She kept tapping him until he opened his eyes. The nurse gave him oral rehydration salts and then fed him later. Since reading this story about what nearly happened to Mohammed, I have wondered how many Somalis have been buried alive just because they were not strong enough to moan.

I also wonder how many people are dying every day in Africa from hunger and other causes just because world attention is focused elsewhere. People now have a mental picture of Africa where hunger is part of the landscape along with civil conflict, debt crisis, AIDS and mismanagement of scarce resources. To most people, it is "déjà vu all over again." We're in an even worse situation than we saw in Ethiopia in 1984-85, but the response to the current crisis has been tragically slow.

It was partly in response to tragic stories such as that of Mohammed that the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) launched an initiative to increase coverage of Africa by the US media. During its annual convention this past August in Detroit, Michigan, the NABJ announced that through its "Africa Outreach" programme, it intends to contribute to the training of African journalists, and to support the development of a free press in Africa by building stronger links between African and African-American journalists. That is a major piece of good news for all those who have expressed concern over the growing marginalization of Africa on the world scene. Until such time as Africa gets a vocal and influential constituency in the US, we shall be at square one. By that I mean it will always require a crisis of biblical proportions for the international and US media to pay attention to Africa.

This phenomenon has lately acquired a new name: the Bosnia syndrome. This syndrome has been seen in the relative media attention given to two crises unfolding at the same time — the one in Bosnia, part of the former Yugoslavia, and the one in Somalia. The former has attracted large-scale media coverage whereas the latter was virtually ignored for months. The Bosnia syndrome was illustrated by what happened last summer when children being evacuated from Bosnia were brutally murdered when their bus was raked by gunfire. Those children were the centre of media attention for several days while horrors of an undescribable nature were happening on a vast scale in Somalia, and going unreported. Let me make it absolutely clear: human suffering, wherever it occurs, pains us all. And we should be concerned about threats to the lives of people, no matter where they take place. For this reason, many people have deplored the fact that it took so long for the media to pay attention to the plight of 1.5 million Somalis whose lives were threatened by hunger and starvation.

Because white people are starving...

Paula Walker, Assistant News Director at NBC-TV in New York, was among those who attended the NABJ convention. She said that pictures of starving Africans do not shock any more, whereas "the public is shocked by pictures coming out of Bosnia because white people are starving." Another American journalist, Sanford Ungar, told the *International Herald Tribune* that "there is a subtle racism at work."

What can we all do for better coverage of Africa in the news media? In the new world scenario, while the curtain falls on the antagonism between the East and the West, Africa is no longer the highly strategic, political and military theatre it used to be. While the world's attention focuses on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the African continent runs the risk of being abandoned to its fate. Yet I am convinced that the media has a role to play in ensuring that Africa remains on the world development agenda.

Indeed, changes on the international scene have repercussions in our continent. The Cold War has ended in Africa, too, creating a dynamic situation which needs accurate description and sympathetic interpretation. We are seeing the results as there is no longer any Soviet Union that must back "its man" in a given African country. The West has also reduced its backing for its own long-standing allies. Aid policies are now based more on need and on criteria such as "good governance" rather than measured by the gauge of anti-communism or anti-capitalism. All this provides a framework to report Africa in ways which are more accurate but also comprehensible to Americans.

The NABJ is one of the largest professional organizations in the US media, and carries a lot of weight in the industry. The membership of the NABJ also happens to be African-American people, i.e. people who can trace their roots to Africa. As such, the NABJ can help explode the myth that very few people are interested in what is going on in Africa. The conventional wisdom insists that the audience in the US for news about sub-Saharan Africa is limited to sections of the government, to some business people and to academics. The African-American community is largely missing from that picture. And yet, there are about 30 million African-Americans, representing approximately 12 per cent of the US population.

The NABJ is therefore in a position to change things for the better. The organization's president, Sidmel Estes Sumpter, has made Africa Outreach a top priority, and is keen to provide members with greater access to information and sources which will facilitate the production of stories about Africa. She also announced the creation of a new programme, called the Ethel Payne Fellowships (in honour of the pioneering journalist who died last year), to give NABJ members new opportunities to write about Africa. Two fellowships will be awarded to print and broadcast journalists every year, enabling each recipient to travel to Africa and report from there as well as provide news stories to NABJ.

I am not alone in believing that the US press can give voice to the ideas and opinions of a broad cross-section of African society. Furthermore, it can now tell its audience about growing popular participation in the decision-making process. It is extremely important to have a vigilant NABJ that will urge its members to present fair information about what is happening in Africa.

There are efforts already under way to spread the message about the benefits of a free press that will keep Africa informed about itself and the American public informed about Africa. We should all join in and work together to support these efforts, not only of those striving to establish an independent press on the continent, but also those trying in the US to get beyond the Bosnia syndrome to report on human suffering and attempts to end it, everywhere. ■

**The African Baobab is one of the world's hardiest trees, thriving in even the most arid environment. It is also the tree under which some Africans traditionally meet to decide issues of common concern.*

AFRICA AGENDA

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

9-13 November, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: "Development Management in Africa: Thirty Years of Experience, Emerging Challenges and Future Priorities" will be discussed at an international conference organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

10-13 November, Berlin, Germany: International Roundtable on Structural Adjustment and Environment held by the German Foundation for International Development.

16-18 November, Dakar, Senegal: "Trampling the Grass. Is Africa's Growing Marginalization in the Newly Emerging International Order Reversible?" is the subject of the first international conference of the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS). Mr. Basil Davidson will give the 1992 ACDESS Foundation Lecture on 15 November.

18-20 November, Lusaka, Zambia: Social dimensions of structural adjustment in Zambia will be discussed by a conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

23-27 November, Nairobi, Kenya: All Africa Conference on Animal Agriculture, organized by, among others, the Kenya Ministry of Livestock Development, the Organization of African Unity/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources and the International Livestock Centre for Africa.

25-27 November, Dakar, Senegal: International Conference on Assistance to African Children, held by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

5-11 December, Rome, Italy: International Conference on Nutrition convened by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

7-11 December, Arusha, Tanzania: "Small Ruminant Research and Development in Africa" is the theme of the Second Biennial Conference of the African Small Ruminant Research Network.

7-12 December, Dakar, Senegal: Third African Conference on Population, jointly organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the UN Population Fund.

8-11 December, Yaoundé, Cameroon: Seventh International Conference on AIDS in Africa.

11-13 January 1993, Washington, US: "Overcoming Poverty: Global Priority" is the theme of the 1993 International Development Conference.

25 February-9 March, Accra, Ghana: "Development in a Clean Environment: the Challenge of the 21st Century" will be the theme of the Fourth Ghana International Trade Fair.

5-7 April, Glasgow, Scotland: Second International Conference on Science and Technology in Third World Development, at the University of Strathclyde.

30 April, Washington, US: Interim Committee meeting of the IMF and World Bank.

27-29 September, Edmonton, Canada: First International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research.

Conference to address global malnutrition

Improved household food security, and the integration of nutrition objectives in development programmes figured prominently in an international and domestic action plan drawn up at an **18-24 August** meeting in Geneva organized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Representatives of 130 countries and several international agencies proposed eight major themes in preparation for the **5-11 December International Conference on Nutrition** in Rome where the action plan is likely to be endorsed.

Poverty is the root cause of the hunger and malnutrition suffered by nearly 800 million people in developing countries, and by many others in developed countries, said participants. And although chronic undernourishment has fallen from 36 per cent of the population in developing countries in 1969-71 to 20 per cent in 1988-90, there remains the paradox of global abundance of food coexisting with widespread malnutrition that contributes to the death of 40,000 children every day, participants argued.

Africa at the end of the 1980s already had some 123 million people living on insufficient dietary energy, WHO reports, with 27 million children suffering from protein-energy malnutrition. This situation has now been aggravated by the drought in Southern Africa.

Non-aligned push for multilateral progress

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has called for a revitalized and democratic United Nations that plays a vigorous role in ensuring greater international equity and justice. Leaders at the **Tenth NAM summit held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 1-6 September** announced plans to contribute to this process by setting up a bureau at UN headquarters to coordinate work on such proposals as strengthening the role of the General Assembly, expanding membership of the Security Council and abolishing the power of veto. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali warned the conference that despite the collapse of the old structure of superpower rivalry, there persisted "the temptation to dominate, either world-wide or regionally."

The 108-member NAM described the growing polarization between North and South as a central issue of international relations, and stressed the renewed importance of multilateral cooperation after the disappointing impasse at the Uruguay Round of trade talks. Arguing that Africa's critical socio-economic situation required special international attention, NAM leaders called for the cancellation of the debts of least-developed countries. They also set up an inter-governmental group to seek debt relief for all developing countries.

Turning to the critical situation in Somalia, NAM leaders announced an immediate $250,000 donation for emergency relief. They said that a task force would also be set up to coordinate such assistance and also "participate actively" in peace-keeping operations there in coordination with the UN and Organization of African Unity.

WHAT'S TAKEN PLACE

23-25 August, Airlie, Virginia, US: Workshop '92. Policy options for sustainable agricultural development in Africa, held by the Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, and sponsored by the Sa sakawa Africa Association (Japan) and Global 2000 (Carter Centre, US).

24-25 August, Nouakchott, Mauritania: 10th Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Senegal River Development Organization.

1-6 September, Jakarta, Indonesia: Summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement.

4-6 September, Brazzaville, Congo: International Conference on Community Health in Africa.

8-9 September, New York, US: Conference on Educational Assistance to Disadvantaged South Africans organized by the UN's Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa.

17-24 September, Washington, US: NGO Forum on IMF and World Bank Structural Adjustment Lending, organized by, among others, the Development Group for Alternative Policy, Third World Network and the European Network on Debt and Development.

22-24 September, Washington, US: Annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank boards of governors.

5-7 October, Libreville, Gabon: 17th Franco-African Summit.

26-27 October, Amsterdam, Netherlands: Ministerial Conference on Malaria organized by the World Health Organization Division of Tropical Diseases.

26-29 October, Paris, France: "Youth, Cities, Jobs: What Future for Africa's Youth?" is the theme of a colloquium organized by the French Cooperation and Development ministry.

AFRICA BOOKS

A Future for Africa: Beyond the Politics of Adjustment by Bade Onimode (Earthscan, London; 1992; £12.95). One of Africa's foremost economic analysts argues that Africa's problems are not insuperable, and although their causes are largely external, the only long-term solutions rest in African hands. He says adjustment programmes imposed on African countries have compounded the disastrous impact of foreign debt, protectionism and falling export prices, and real development will only begin when Africa's people control their abundant resources in the framework of democratic and accountable political structures.

Structural Adjustment and African Women Farmers ed. Christina H. Gladwin (University of Florida Press, Gainsville, US; 1991; $34.95).

Structural Adjustment, Growth and Welfare: The Case of Niger, 1982-1989 by Kiari Liman Tinguiri. **The Impact of Self-Imposed Adjustment: The Case of Burkina Faso, 1983-1989** by Kimseyinga Savadogo and Claude Wetta (both UNICEF International Child Develpoment Centre, Florence; 1991; $6).

Africa's Problems, African Initiatives (Africa Policy Information Centre, Washington, US; 1992; $5). Brings together three recent major policy documents: *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes* (1989); *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation* (1990); and the working document for the Kampala Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (1991).

New Avenues for Technical Cooperation in Africa: Improving the record in terms of capacity building by J. Bossuyt, G. Laporte and F. van Hoek (European Centre for Development Policy and Management, Maastricht, The Netherlands; 1992).

Pour une nouvelle alliance Afrique-Europe by Nathalie Beaux et al (Futuribles, Paris; 1992; 100FF).

African Development Perspectives Yearbook, 1990/91: Industrialization Based on Agricultural Development eds. Research Group on African Development Perspectives, based at the University of Bremen, Germany. (Lit Verlag, Münster/Hamburg, Germany; 1992; $65 plus $10 for postage/handling). A huge publication with wide-ranging studies.

African Technology Forum (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Branch, P.O. Box 171, Cambridge, MA 02139-9992, US; $3.50 per issue; annual subscription $8 from Africa, $14 elsewhere). This magazine provides news and views on the structural and social impact of technology in Africa, with each issue focusing on such major areas as energy and transportation technologies.

The Debt Boomerang by Susan George (Pluto Press, London, UK; 1992).

War and adjustment in Mozambique

War, Debt and Structural Adjustment in Mozambique: The Social Impact, by Judith Marshall (The North-South Institute, Ottawa; 1992; $10)

Conspicuous Destruction: War, Famine and the Reform Process in Mozambique (Africa Watch, New York; 1992; $15)

Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots? by Joseph Hanlon (James Currey, London; Indiana University Press, Bloomington; 1991; $37.50)

A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique by William Finnegan (University of California Press, Berkeley; 1992; $25)

Instead of "classic" adjustment policies laced with palliative social measures, argues Judith Marshall, Mozambique needs international reparations as a victim of apartheid war, and some form of "Marshall Plan" for national reconstruction. The scene of "one of the most brutal holocausts against ordinary human beings since World War II," according to the US State Department's 1988 Gersony Report, Mozambique in 1990 was also the world's "poorest, hungriest, most indebted, most aid-dependent country" in World Bank eyes. While the useful Africa Watch publication evaluates the troubled state of human rights (as well as the evolution of US foreign policy towards Mozambique), William Finnegan explores the history and process of devastation, relating many stories of the survivors of different brutalities. He also writes briefly but pointedly about the often cynical industry of the "aid community".

Joseph Hanlon argues that Mozambique was battered by the destabilization war and an aid-freeze into accepting Western aid conditionalities and a structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1987. This prompted a tide of "free market fundamentalism" on which aid workers (mostly with good motives), donor and non-governmental organizations have combined to further erode Mozambique's sovereignty.

This is true even at district level, says Marshall, echoing Hanlon's charge that Mozambique is a case study in the recolonization work of aid and adjustment. She cites Professor Reginald Green (in his capacity as a senior policy advisor in Mozambique's planning ministry) who wrote in 1990 that "the ways 'donors' and 'cooperants' operate is steadily decapitating the government and its ability to analyze, select, coordinate or monitor policy and performance."

Mozambique's first needs, Marshall argues, include peace and food security. All other macro-economic interventions "appear as mere tinkering" and creditors should first cancel or substantially reduce Mozambique's $5 bn external debt, as proposed in 1991 by IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus who described the burden as "unbearable."

"The New Conquistadors", Race and Class Vol. 34, No.1 (Institute of Race Relations, London; 1992; £4). Collection of essays on GATT, IMF and World Bank relations with developing countries, including "Africa: A political audit" by Victoria Brittain and "The World Bank and education in Africa" by the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa.

Africa's Media Image ed. Beverly G. Hawk (Praeger/Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, US; 1992; $49.95). An anthology of essays on American media coverage of Africa.

The State and Development in Ethiopia by Girma Kebbede (Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, US; $30). Studies the human and ecological costs of post-1974 development strategy, with a postscript on national challenges after Mengistu's overthrow in May 1991.

States in Transition: Russia and South Africa by Vladimir Tikhomirov (International Freedom Foundation, Washington, US; 1992; $14.95).

Economic Cooperation in Southern Africa: Prospects for Regional Integration by Gavin Maasdorp (Conflict Study 253; Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, London; 1992; £10). The author concludes that either a strong, post-apartheid South African economy could dominate a Southern African Common Market incorporating all other economic groupings in the region, or beside a weak South Africa, the Southern African Development Community (formerly SADCC) and the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) would assume greater significance.

Trading with South Africa: the policy options for the EC by Sheila Page and Christopher Stevens (Overseas Development Institute, London; 1992; £20).

Accountability in Namibia: Human Rights and the Transition to Democracy (Africa Watch, New York, US; 1992; $10).

Soil and Water Conservation in Sub-Saharan Africa: Towards Sustainable Production by the Rural Poor by W. Critchley, C. Reij and S. Turner (International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome; 1992).

La vallée du fleuve Sénégal: Evaluations et perspectives d'une décennie d'aménagements (1980-90) ed. B. Crousse, P. Mathieu, S. Seck (Karthala, Paris; 1991).

Land Degradation and Rehabilitation. Research in Africa 1980-1990: Retrospect and prospect by Michael Stocking. From Woodlots to Village Land Management in the Sahel (Issues Papers 34 and 35, International Institute for Environment and Development, London; June 1992).

Modern Plantation Agriculture: Corporate Wealth and Labour Squalor by René Loewenson (Zed Books, London; 1992; £32.95 hb/£11.95 pb) surveys the plight of plantation labourers in Asia, Africa, Central and South America. The author's study of her own country, Zimbabwe, finds that technological innovation and production shifts have further marginalized planatation workers.

AFRICA IN BRIEF

French debt deal for four African countries

Stepping ahead of other industrialized country creditors, France plans to implement new debt-relief measures for francophone African middle-income countries by end-1992. A $794 mn debt-into-development conversion fund will be set up for Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, said French Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy in early October at the 17th Franco-African summit in Libreville, Gabon. He said the fund's operations would "correspond to a cancellation" of part of the four countries' heavy external debt to France.

President Omar Bongo

Although full details are yet to emerge, French officials say the fund would be set up with debt obligation of the four countries. Once a development project had been selected by French government agencies, a portion of the debt obligations would be converted into finance for that project, and that country's debt obligation would be reduced by an equivalent amount. Suitable projects would range from support for small businesses to environmental protection.

Francophone leaders welcomed the move, and urged industrialized countries to not only reduce Africa's debt burden, but also ensure more remunerative commodity prices. Mr. Bérégovoy joined his own "cry of indignation" to African criticisms of the conditionalities imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). But he promised them France's full support only if their economic reforms proceeded "without detours."

Only 14 African leaders were there to hear Mr. Bérégovoy emphasize "security, stability and development," whereas in 1990 at La Baule, 23 heard President François Mitterrand link future aid to democratization. However, Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny was applauded in Libreville for arguing that "democracy does not go together well with poverty."

Africa, said Gabonese President Omar Bongo, needed adjustment programmes that better integrated their "legitimate social aspirations." Mr. Bérégovoy praised francophone countries for their integration efforts, noting the harmonization in July this year of insurance regulations, and the progress towards harmonizing commercial law, social security, and statistics.

Responding to continued anxiety over the fate of the franc zone after unification of the European Community by 31 December this year, French officials restated their commitment to maintaining both the zone and the CFA franc's 50:1 parity to the French franc which is unchanged since 1948. They described persistent rumours of devaluation as a "psychological attack."

The World Bank and IMF are longtime advocates of CFA devaluation, for reasons summed up bluntly in Paris in early March by US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen, who said francophone African economies "could not be competitive because their currency is overvalued." ■

UNCTAD: African debt too high

Debt service for nearly half of Africa's poorest countries would "remain high, sometimes very high" despite the improved relief terms on offer from Western creditors, concludes a recent analysis by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Since December 1991, most official creditors have offered to cancel half of low-income countries' eligible debt servicing due, an improvement on the one-third originally offered under the 'Toronto terms,' though still short of the two-thirds cancellation under the the 'Trinidad terms' proposed by the UK.

The current "enhanced Toronto terms" could have an "important impact" on five eligible African countries — Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Malawi and Togo — and reduce debt service ratios to under 20 per cent for a further six — Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, Zaire and Zambia — according to UNCTAD's 1992 *Trade and Development Report*. Benin, Togo and Zambia have already secured the improved terms.

But another eight African countries would derive fewer benefits because much of their due debt is owed to creditors not offering 'enhanced Toronto,' or is owed to multilateral agencies which cannot reschedule it. This is true of Uganda, which got better terms earlier this year, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

UNCTAD acknowledges that its picture of debt relief is particularly optimistic. It assumes that new debt incurred after what is termed the "cut-off" date is rescheduled on the improved terms, though this is not always the case. For example, Ugandan debt incurred after 1983 is not covered by the new rescheduling deal. Also, all creditors are assumed to offer 'enhanced Toronto,' while in fact Australia and the United States are offering only original Toronto terms. Finally, the 5 per cent annual growth in export earnings used by UNCTAD to assess the burden of future debt payments may prove too optimistic. ■

Priority for early-warning against drought in Africa

Faced with recurrent drought and dependence on rain-fed agriculture, Africa must give priority to preventing the famines it has endured for nearly 30 years, warns Professor G.O. Obasi, director-general of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Developed countries should also turn "emergency handouts" at repeated pledging conferences into sustained support for the long-term planning that Africa needs to fight hunger, he added, in a recent interview with *Africa Recovery*.

Dr. Obasi noted that donors were reducing resource flows to Africa, the continent least able to overcome natural disasters. Shortage of funding had already delayed efforts to make operational the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), jointly set up in Niamey, Niger, by the WMO and the UN Economic Commission for Africa. ACMAD is to form the central point in an African meteorological network — other parts already functioning include the Harare and Nairobi drought-monitoring centres — which would enable African governments to plan up to nine months ahead against food shortages, Dr. Obasi declared. ■

Aid boost for Tanzania

Expressing satisfaction with Tanzania's economic and political reform efforts, major donor countries have pledged some $990 mn to support Tanzania's adjustment programme during 1992/93. The amount pledged at the late June conference in Paris was 10 per cent higher than the year before.

The delegates commended Tanzania for further liberalizing its foreign exchange system, initiating parastatal reform and establishing a commission to accelerate privatization, making progress in financial sector

reforms and adopting a population policy.

Donors said that their pledges expressed "strong endorsement" of Tanzania's "rapid change towards a multi-party system, democratization and freedom of the press." ■

ECOWAS: renewed drive for economic union

West African leaders have scheduled an extraordinary summit for December 1992 to "adopt and sign" a revised treaty aimed at accelerating progress towards sub-regional economic union. Acknowledging that little ground had been gained in ensuring the free movement of goods and people, an end-July conference of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Dakar agreed to submit provisions of the revised treaty to popular debate, and then approve amendments at the December summit.

ECOWAS Executive Secretary Abass Bundu hoped that the Dakar summit had marked a turning point for sub-regional integration, which had been stalled by "non-implementation at national level of community acts and decisions." The new treaty enables ECOWAS leaders to take decisions binding on both community institutions and member-states, and sets out a timetable to ensure coordinated policies in all economic and social sectors of the 16 member-countries by 2015.

ECOWAS leaders gave themselves one year to make progress on suppressing some non-tariff barriers on intra-Community trade, simplifying customs and transit formalities, and cutting the number of checkpoints on international roads.

To finance the integration process, the revised treaty proposes to raise $100-160 mn a year from a 1 per cent levy on each country's total imports from third countries. It also specifies sanctions leading to suspension from ECOWAS for members who default in their payments.

Past problems in member-states' economic and political relations have meant that "a lot of things that should have been done were not achieved," declared General Yakubu Gowon, a former Nigerian Head of State and chair of the Committee of Eminent Persons set up in May 1991 to revise the ECOWAS treaty. Noting the new political climate in the sub-region, Mr. Bundu hoped that democratization would replace "mediocrity, graft and mismanagement" with public accountability and efficiency. But he detected weak foundations to some of the vaunted political and economic liberalization processes in West Africa, and warned that they could "easily be derailed by a restive people — victims of socio-economic reforms." ■

Reflecting the growing recognition by African governments of the importance of population trends and policies for the continent's economic development, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) is planning to establish a Population Commission. In October OAU Secretary-General Salim Salim (above, right) and Executive Director Nafis Sadik of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which has pledged support for the new OAU institution, signed a formal agreement in New York to further strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. "The question of population is taken very seriously on the continent," Mr. Salim said.

Southern Africa moves towards closer ties

Determined to turn the Southern African region into a powerful economic bloc, members of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) have agreed to turn their loose association into a "comprehensive and binding framework for regional integration." Leaders of the 10-member organization signed a treaty in Windhoek, Namibia, at the end of August, establishing as a legal entity the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as a first step towards an economic community which would hopefully encompass a majority-ruled South Africa.

The new SADC will require members to put regional interests above national considerations, Namibia's President Sam Nujoma told the summit, adding that the sacrifices involved "would be a test of our political maturity." Tanzania's President Ali Hassan Mwinyi said that by pooling resources together SADC will make "faster progress towards economic and social development."

Details on the restructuring of former SADCC operations and a timetable for accelerated regional integration are being prepared for the annual meeting with donors, scheduled for late January in Zimbabwe. At the previous donors' meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, proposals were made for a free trade area as a first step towards a regional common market and currency. Full ratification of the treaty is expected by next year's August summit.

The decision to go ahead with formalizing the links between the 10 members — Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe — has effectively blocked any speedy moves towards a merger with the 18-member Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) proposed at its summit last January and later formally presented to the then SADCC. Eight of SADC's members are also part of the PTA. A communique issued after SADC's summit stated that the two had "distinct objectives and mandates and must, therefore, continue to exist as autonomous, but complementary entities." ■

Focal point for popular participation

Pilot projects have been launched in Uganda and Namibia to improve dialogue between government policy-makers and people's organizations. The projects are sponsored by a recently established unit of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which aims to help strengthen the capacity of people's associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to influence policies and programmes for sustainable development. Known as a Focal Point, the unit , which publishes a newsletter called *People First*, will liaise between UN agencies and NGOs, develop a data bank and publish studies to promote the goals of the 1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development. ■

AFRICA WATCH

UN PEACEKEEPING

New UN operation set for Mozambique

The involvement of the United Nations in peace-keeping and humanitarian operations in Africa has been further widened with the implementation of a peace agreement in Mozambique. The treaty, signed in Rome on 4 October, which aims to end 16 years of war between the Mozambican government and the Renamo insurgent forces, calls on the UN to help monitor the ceasefire, supervise the demobilization of troops and insurgents and chair a Humanitarian Assistance Committee.

"The United Nations is again faced with an enormous challenge," said UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has appointed Mr. Aldo Ajello of Italy as his Special Representative for Mozambique. The Security Council has also approved the dispatch of an initial unit of 25 military observers, the first of whom arrived in the country on 15 October, the day the ceasefire took effect

The ceasefire is expected to open the way for a more massive and effective delivery of food and other aid to millions of Mozambicans threatened by starvation (see page 11). The Mozambican government has asked Italy to convene an international donors conference to mobilize funds for emergency and rehabilitation programmes and to support the holding of general elections in October 1993.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali has estimated that the finance needed for the UN Operation in Mozambique would be greater than the one in Angola. There the UN helped in monitoring the demobilization of forces, oversaw voter registration, as well as observing the late-September elections. These were declared free and fair by the UN. But disputes over the results had led to heavy fighting between government and rebel UNITA forces despite a 2 November ceasefire arranged by the UN. ■

UN/Milton Grant

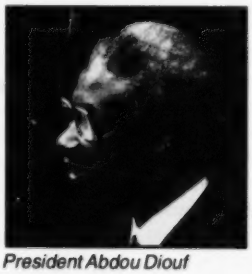
UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola Margaret Anstee talks to voters in the September elections.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Africa voices its debt concerns at the UN

President Abdou Diouf of Senegal has urged the international community to explore "new routes" towards a solution for Africa's crushing burden of debt. Addressing the 47th UN General Assembly, he said repayments swallowed most of the "feeble financial resources" left over from the continent's worsening terms of trade.

The UN's New Agenda for the Development of Africa, adopted at end-1992, must not suffer the fate of the 1986-90 UN Africa Recovery Programme which saw most industrialized countries failing to fulfil their side of the pact, argued President Diouf, who is current chairman of the Organization of African Unity.



President Abdou Diouf

Echoing this call for concerted international efforts, Botswana's President Sir Ketumile Masire joined other African delegations in pointing to the protectionism, "crushing debt burden, falling commodity prices and painful structural adjustment programmes" that had contributed to stagnation and in some cases regression in African economies. Other African speakers called for increased resource flows not only to support economic reforms in Africa but also to enable the achievements of the UN environment and development conference to become reality

On restructuring within the UN itself, President Diouf said any new orientation at UN should bear in mind that "peace and security are precarious without the elimination of poverty and a narrowing of the gap between North and South." He added that the pursuit of efficiency should not sacrifice the spirit of democracy which guarantees the universality of the UN. Several countries suggested that it was time to enlarge the permanent membership of the UN Security Council, and Nigeria argued that it was best qualified to represent Africa. ■

FINANCIAL FLOWS

Africa misses out on financial upturn

Africa is the only region which has missed out on a recent sharp increase in financial flows to developing countries. After seven consecutive years of providing funds to rich countries, developing countries have become net recipients of financial resources in the last two years. In 1991, net transfers to developing countries as a whole were a positive $32.5 bn after a $9.6 bn inflow in 1990, according to preliminary estimates from the UN. The annual outflow of funds peaked at a negative $23.4 bn in 1988, the UN figures show.

While consistently positive during the 1980s, the net transfer of financial resources to Africa, however, has fallen sharply in the last two years — to $1.1 bn and $900 mn, from a 1988-89 level of $4 bn plus. It points out that for Africa, if terms of trade losses are taken into account, there has continued to be a net outflow of real resources (see page 31).

The revival in the financial fortune of developing countries overall owes much to the return of flight capital in Latin America — which contributed to a $4.4 bn inflow for the region after outflows of $15.6 bn the previous year — and to the general buoyancy in some Asian economies, the UN figures suggest.

Africa has enjoyed neither, while official flows, upon which the region largely depends, have fallen back for Africa as a whole. For sub-Saharan Africa, excluding Nigeria, inflows rose in 1991 after a sharp dip in 1989-90, though the figures show the sub-region's now near total dependence upon official flows.

The September report to the UN General Assembly warns that it is still unclear whether the more postive overall trend for developing countries will continue. ■